



THE GOSPEL OF THE SIKH GURUS

Dr. G. S. Chauhan

The Gospel of The Sikh Gurus

FREE GIFT NOT FOR SALE

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by :

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Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji giving dictation of DAMDAMI BIR to
Bhai Mani Singh Ji.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Bhai Vir Singh who discovered the rare manuscript of "Sikhan Di Bhagat Mala", published it, so that the present generations may learn the rare knowledge disseminated by the Sikh Gurus a few centuries ago. Bhai Sahib has done a great service to humanity and deserves heartfelt gratefulness from all the persons on spiritual path.

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About the Book

This little book is a wonderful storehouse of wisdom for spiritual seekers. It was written three centuries ago by Bhai Mani Singh a great **saint-soldier-martyr** who was confidant of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Master.

Human beings aim at attaining four targets in their lives i.e. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* (moral responsibilities, wealth, worldly desires and liberation). This book answers varied questions on these subjects which are as valid to-day as were three to five centuries ago.

For spiritual advancement, there are paths like Knowledge, Service, Devotion, *Hath Yoga*, etc. This book gives finer details, subtleties, complexities and benefits of each discipline in simple, lucid and practical manner.

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Preface

Every religion has two components. One is the spiritual advancement of the disciples, the instructions for which are given by its founder and are eternal in nature and the second is the rituals and the way of life. The second part gets modified with time depending upon political and social circumstances. With passage of time, the understanding and practice of spiritual principles becomes secondary and ritual worship with outward signs of religion gains importance. Sikhism or the path of Guru Nanak Dev is no exception. To maintain correct balance between the two components of a religion, enlightened souls like Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Ditt Singh Gyani and other founders of 'Singh Sabha' movement have, from time to time, presented the devotees with ideas to enable them to correctly understand the teachings of the Gurus and emulate them. The book "*Sikhan di Bhagat Mala*" or the garland of the Sikh saints by Bhai Mani Singh *Shahid* is an attempt in this direction. In this book, stories of the disciples of Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Har Gobind are given.

Bhai Gurdas, in his 11th ballad has described the characteristics of a perfect disciple in the first twelve stanzas. Further 13th to 31st stanzas are only a catalogue of names and the places they came from. During the times of Bhai Gurdas, these names and their lives were fresh in the minds of the disciples. By the time of Guru Gobind Singh, these memories got faded. So the devotees requested Guru Gobind Singh to describe the achievements of these great disciples. Guru ji described their stories, which were written down by Bhai Mani Singh in the form of a book.

Bhai Vir Singh came across a manuscript copy of this book copied in early nineteenth century. According to Bhai Vir Singh, the language of this book made it clear that it was written more than 150 years earlier. This was first printed in book form in 1912 AD and is now available in reprint form from Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, Bhai Vir Singh Marg, New Delhi.

Most of the disciples who came to Guru ji were desirous of liberation so as to end their cycle of birth and death. They were from diverse backgrounds like coolies, carpenters, businessmen, government officials, soldiers, farmers, teachers and learned persons etc. Depending upon their karmic and mental level, Guru ji prescribed the type of physical service, meditation, charities or *kirtan* and discourses etc. for them.

As explained in the story of Bhai Banwali and Parasram (para 7.8) Guru Granth Sahib has instructions for all types and levels of devotees. Just as a medical practitioner though has medicines for all diseases but before prescribing any one of them, he checks up the patient to diagnose the cause of the malady. Similarly a Guru oriented disciple will examine a seeker of Truth and advise him the correct course of spiritual discipline. This fact becomes amply clear on reading this book and every body may find advice to their state of evolution.

The teachings of the Sikh Gurus are about the Eternal Lord. These are therefore beyond time, space, country, race, caste or creed. These are as relevant today as they were five centuries ago, during the times of Guru Nanak Dev.

When I came across this book, I thought that this gem of spiritual instructions by the Sikh Gurus should be accessible to all seekers of Truth from the Sikh as well as other religions. Since the reach of *Gurmukhi* script was limited, its translation in English was inescapable, so that it could be circulated all over India and foreign countries. Hence I have undertaken the task of translation.

The subjects dealt with in this book are as varied as the number of stories. It has innermost secrets of meditation,

Vedanta, karam Yoga, bhakti Yoga, Gyan Yoga, renunciation, control of senses, mind, charity, achieving of single minded concentration, austerities etc. A number of stories help correct understanding of certain historical facts.

My thanks are due to Miss Puneet Kaur who set the book on computer with great devotion. May the Lord bless her.

I am sure this humble effort will help innumerable readers to learn what Bhai Mani Singh had heard from Guru Gobind Singh.

August 2009

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IK ONKAR
SATNAM SRI WAHEGURU

Preface to the Original Book *"Sikhan di Bhagat Mala"*

By
Shahid Bhai Mani Singh

Once some devotees requested Bhai Mani Singh that Bhai Gurdas in his 11th ballad has described the qualities of true devotees from the time of Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Har Gobind. So they desired to know the achievements and the way of life of these exalted persons to be able to emulate them.

Bhai Mani Singh appreciated the suggestion. He said that once he too had made a similar request to Guru Gobind Singh and whatever Guru ji very kindly explained, he would narrate that. He advised the devotees to listen very carefully with one pointed mind and act on it in their daily lives. They would thus be blessed with discipleship.

Guru Gobind Singh has blessed that the fruit of listening to the dialogues in this book will be the same as that of listening to all compositions of Bhai Gurdas. Bhai Mani Singh has stated that he is narrating the stories exactly as given by the 10th Master.

Brief Life Sketch of Scholar– Martyr Bhai Mani Singh Ji

At typically critical and chaotic times in the life of any community, some unique leader or a martyr does come up to save it from total canker and collapse. Sikh community was facing just such a situation after passing away of Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded (Maharashtra state) and martyrdom of Banda Singh Bahadur. Bhai Mani Singh played his role in such a critical time when the Sikhs were paralyzed and divided into self confronting groups and facing the threat of annihilation at the hands of Delhi's Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar and Punjab's new governor Abdul Samad at Lahore. Bhai Mani Singh not only united all the warring groups but simultaneously completed the task of compiling the writings of Guru Gobind Singh in the form of "Dasam Granth", establishing the sanctity of "Guru Granth Sahib" as the reigning Guru, creating literature to provide spiritual needs of the Sikhs and preaching the tenants of Sikhism to the masses so as to instill faith in them.

Bhai Mani Singh was born at Kabowal village of Malwa (i.e. Patiala region) in a family of petty peasants. His grandfather Sh. Balu Ram is believed to have sacrificed his life at the battle of Kartarpur while fighting for the 6th Guru Shri Hargobind. Bhai Sahib's father, Sh. Kala Ram was a staunch follower of Sikh Gurus and used to visit Kiratpur, which was then the seat of the 7th Guru, Shri Har Rai.

On the eve of Baisakhi, Shri Kala Ram visited Anandpur, which was at that time the headquarters of the 9th Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur alongwith his 7 years old son then Mani Ram. Mani Ram and Gobind Rai happened to be of almost same age group. Therefore, during his stay at

Anandpur, Mani Ram was emotionally mesmerized by Gobind Rai. Both became play mates. This relation lasted for life. For the next 33 years of a concentrated historic era, both sustained an unbreakable bond.

Young Mani Ram, temperamentally tended extraordinarily towards spiritualism and educational pursuits right from his early age. He is said to have, soon mastered various branches of knowledge. With the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur in November 1675, the young Gobind Rai became the successor Guru. He and his impassioned followers reshaped their strategies for dynamic action. Mani Ram stood steadfastly with his mentor and master all the while. Bhai Mani Singh, for long, a constant companion of his Guru, was also a conspicuous writer and included in the galaxy of 52 picked up scholars at Paonta Sahib (Nahan in Himachal Pradesh). Bhai Mani Singh was a captivating *katha Vachik* i.e. narrator of history and explanations of Gurbani. His style was arresting. He was adept in stirring emotions and injecting new spirit among his audience. He was specially commissioned by Guru Gobind Singh for preparing 3rd and final edition of *Adi Granth* and he also himself scribed some copies of the *Adi Granth*. He also wrote some explicit annotations of selected compositions of Bhai Gurudas apart from those of *Japji*, *Asa di Var* and *Sidh Gosht* etc. His elaborations on "*Rehat*" and "*Maryada*" proved historic trend setters for the Sikh community during most critical times after Guru Gobind Singh. Later when he was *Jathedar* of *Akal Takhat*, he wrote *Bhagat Ratnavali* or *Sikhan di Baghat Mala* (this book), *Gyan Ratnavali* and some other inspiring books. He thus dispensed an amalgam of *Gyan* (knowledge), *karam* (action) and *Bhagti* (devotion), the needed antibiotic for social, cultural and political malaise so as to integrate the Sikhs into a community of fearless fighters, righteous crusaders and saint soldiers.

Some time before the creation of *khalsa*, Guru Gobind Singh appointed Bhai Mani Singh as his adviser-in-chief and *Dewan* in view of his credibility and qualities of head and heart. He was baptized as "Singh" on the historic

day of *Baisakhi* April 13, 1699 A.D. along with his family by the *Panj Pyaras* in the first batch of *Amritdharis* when Guru Gobind Singh also received baptism. Bhai Mani Ram thus became Bhai Mani Singh.

The *Sodhi Masands* in occupation of Sri Hari Mandir at Amritsar had not permitted Guru Tegh Bhadur to enter into the complex and had even threatened his life. In 1699 A.D., Guru Gobind Singh forcibly evicted them. He then deputed Bhai Mani Singh to take the charge there and also bestowed a commendation certificate upon him.

In the last and fiercest battle of Anandpur (1704 A.D.) when the Anandpur fort was vacated, the entourage of Guru Gobind Singh was scattered while crossing the flooded Sirsa, a tributary of river Sutlej. While Guru Gobind Singh with his two elder sons and a few companions went to Chamkaur, his mother Mata Gujri with two younger sons accompanied by their Brahmin cook Gangu went to his ancestral village near Morinda. The third group mainly comprising of Mata Sahib Kaur and Mata Sundari (wives of Guru Gobind Singh) accompanied by Bhai Mani Singh and some other members of the household reached Delhi safely. He later established secret contact with Guru Gobind Singh in Machhiwara forest and restored his family to him. This was a meticulous operation and speaks volumes of Bhai Mani Singh's sagacity, skill, courage and selfless devotion.

Bhai Mani Singh followed Guru Gobind Singh to Deccan. From there the Guru sent his wives again under most dependable care of Bhai Mani Singh. On account of sudden death of Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded in October 1708 A.D., Bhai Mani Singh could never meet his Master physically after that.

With the excruciating martyrdom of **Banda Singh Bahadur** in 1716 A.D., the Sikhs by and large felt themselves in terrible straits and rudderless. There was serious rivalry between the *Bandei* i.e. followers of Banda Singh Bahadur and *Tat Khalsa* the followers of original traditions of Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Mani Singh who

had headquartered himself at Amritsar as *Jathedar* of Akal Takhat, as a father figure, played a key role in uniting the community. He even, resorted to force as and when needed. Mehnat Singh, the representative of *Bandeis* lost his life and supremacy of *Tat Khalsa* was restored. The union ceremony was performed under the leadership of Bhai Mani Singh as *Jathedar* of Akal Takhat. Bhai Mani Singh's efforts filled the vacuum in the leadership and the supremacy of the "Akal Takhat" was accepted by one and all in the community. There was a positive metamorphosis. The hiding "Singhs" started their swoops on the Mughal armies. In the following years even the terrible foreign invaders, like Nadir Shah Durrani and Ahmed Shah Abdali had to confess the reckonable force and perceptible feel of the Sikhs. It can be said that the foundation of Sikh empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was laid by Bhai Mani Singh.

Bhai Mani Singh paid special and meticulous personal attention to management of finances. "*Guru's Golak*" was a sacred community fund. He ensured that expences were judiciously incurred and properly accounted for. As a measure of abundant caution, he apprised Mata Sundari of the financial accounts periodically to discharge his personal integrity and responsibility.

Bhai Mani Singh not only performed preaching and discourses at Amritsar but also toured country side to kindle the flame of Guru's teachings and conversion of peasantry into "Singhs". These neo Sikhs provided the enforcement to the hiding groups keeping the Mughal armies at bay. Maintaining gorilla warfare for a long time needs lots of money, rations, armaments and manpower. As an intense observer and *Jathedar* Of Akal Takhat, Bhai Mani Singh realized the difficult situation and decided to bring all the sikh armies on a common platform for demarcating their goal and action plan. He therefore decided to organize a huge congregation of sikhs at Amritsar to serve as "*Sarbat Khalsa*" or general body meeting to pass common resolutions acceptable to all

groups. Bhai Mani Singh was not a *persona-non-grata* with the Mughal rulers. They took him as a harmless pious saint-academician Head Priest. So Bhai Mani Singh obtained administrative approval from Lahore Durbar on the condition of paying Rs 1000/- as fees after the function.

Zakaria Khan, the governor of Lahore tried to be cunning. He thought of grabbing the money and also hit the gathered Sikhs hard by a deceitful swoop. Bhai Mani Singh being a pious man had many sympathizers among the Muslims and court officials. So the news leaked out and the whole plan misfired. The gathered Sikhs were on caution and quite alert. So a number of Zakaria Khan's men lost their lives at the hands of the escaping Sikhs.

Bhai Mani Singh refused to pay the agreed sum on the plea that the expected offerings did not materialize due to Zakaria's hasty and fraudulent action. Thus Zakaria lost not only the money but also a number of his men and made a mockery of himself before his superiors, rivals and commons. The angry, raging Zakaria obtained a *Fatwa* from a *kazi* and got Mani Singh and his companion Dewan Singh arrested. As punishment they were to either accept Islam and to denounce Sikhism or to be pincered into pieces. Zakaria thought that conversion of *Jathedar* of Akal Takhat would demoralize the whole of sikh community or his death would serve as a useful deterrent. Heroically, Bhai Mani Singh belied Zakaria's hopes. He was all smiles when he was cut piece-meal on June 24, 1737. He steadfastly refused to get converted or to divulge any information on the sikh armies. It is believed that when Bhai Mani Singh with his two sons in chains were produced in the court of Zakaria, defying the court etiquettes, they raised *jaikaras* (slogans) of "Wahe Guru Ji ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji ki Fateh".

Bhai Mani Singh's life account undoubtedly shows that he was paradigm of greatness, self surrender, self sacrifice, scholarship and swordmanship. He served as an anchor for the sikh community in the most delicate times. He can rightly be called "*Sant-Sipahi*" or a saint soldier and a Martyr.

Chapter 1

Characteristics of a Perfect Disciple

Bhai Gurdas, a noted scholar had the good fortune of being the scribe of the original Guru Granth Sahib written under the instructions of Guru Arjun Dev ji. He has also authored a lot of poetry in the form of ballads (*Vaars*). The first twelve stanzas of his eleventh ballad describe the characteristics of a perfect disciple. From the 13th to the 31st stanza, he has listed the names of well-known disciples of Sri Guru Nanak Dev to Sri Guru Har Gobind Sahib.

This chapter contains the gist of the first twelve stanzas.

STANZA ONE

Guru Has Unlimited Treasures of Name & Divine Knowledge

The kings and emperors belong to this world and they collect wealth, which is perishable. They leave it behind when they die. Guru Nanak Dev and his successors are the true emperors as they have the true wealth of God's Name and Divine Knowledge. Those devotees who serve them are blessed with this true wealth and their cycle of birth and death is terminated. The worldly kings rule only in their own territory but the Gurus rule over the whole world. A king may bestow wealth on a servant, but only when he is pleased, by some service rendered. Therefore this magnanimity is false as it is merely an exchange. On the other hand the *Satguru* when pleased shows his kindness

by leading one to the assembly of devotees and showering the true wealth of God's Name and Divine Knowledge thus ending his cycle of birth and death.

The Gods in heaven who have drunk nectar of Lord Brahma, may live for one million years, but have not been able to eliminate their negative emotions i.e. jealousy etc. On the other hand the devotees who listen to Guru's words i.e., *Gurbani* realize their True Self. They get rid of anger, ego, lust, jealousy and other desires. They attain liberation.

In a king's court wine is served only to those who can maintain state secrets. The intoxication of wine lasts for half a day only but those intoxicated with Guru's words are infused with a sense of service and love all the time. They come to know about secrets of the past, present and future. There is an unlimited treasure of *Gurbani* (Guru's words) in the Guru's court.

STANZA TWO

Guru's Disciples are Egoless and Above Worldly Enjoyments

The knowledge that the disciples receive is of two types. One is from books and worldly teachers. The other is the True Knowledge, which comes directly from the Gurus in the form of '*Gurbani*'. One who absorbs the nectar of '*Gurbani*' becomes a friend and confidant of the Lord and attains Divine Knowledge. But a person who after achieving Divine Knowledge begins to boast and preach his own interpretation of Guru's wisdom is a sinner or a criminal.

In Urdu, a confidant is called '*mehram*' but with addition of a dot in Urdu script, it becomes '*mujrim*' i.e. a criminal. Bhai Gurdas with this example has explained the disastrous effect of personal ego (the dot), which changes a person from a confidant of the Lord into a criminal. This person is like a woman who is unfaithful while professing loyalty to her husband.

Nobody blames a blind man who falls into a well but everyone will condemn a man with a lamp in his hand and good sight if he falls into a well. Thus, if an ignorant person indulges in sinful activity, nobody blames him but nobody forgives a learned person who commits a sin. Such a person is unfit to enter the Lord's court.

When a devotee goes to the Guru with no ego or false wisdom and humbly serves the disciples with zeal and devotion and takes the Guru's teachings to heart, the purity of his mind and concentration in meditation increases day by day. Those driven towards the Guru, those who have tasted the love of devotion, rise above sensual pleasures. They know that the nourishment offered by a 'chapatti' is the same whether cooked over sandalwood fire or ordinary grass and wood fire. They also know that the purpose of their every breath is to recite the Lord's Name. Therefore, it is irrelevant what they eat i.e. a dry 'chapatti' or rich puddings. Baba Sheikh Farid has urged the people to eat simple dry 'chapattis' and drink cold water rather than crave for the buttered 'chapattis' as this would only lead to discontentment.

The Guru's disciples consider the *Gurbani* to be the Guru's image and the assembly of devotees as the seat of the Supreme Being. Their devotion is their only joy. When they bow to the assembly of devotees, they are bowing to the 'Waheguru', the Supreme Being and listen to His words in the 'kirtan' of *Gurbani*. They lead a disciplined life by getting up early in the morning and reciting the *Gurbani* after their bath. They perform their worldly business honestly and share their earnings with the needy. Even though the Supreme Being is beyond reach, He can be attained through meditation on *Gurbani*. The saints know that 'Waheguru' is everywhere and resides in all beings. With this understanding, they suffer hardships on their own body, but perform acts for others' good. The saints suffer hardships on their body for their own purification, before their self-realization and for others' good after self-realization.

STANZA THREE

Surrender and Contentment

The lives of the devotees who associate with the saints, attend services in the *Gurudwara*, bow before the Guru Granth Sahib, take the teachings of '*Gurbani*' to their heart and serve and help other devotees and the needy in all possible manner, have a fruitful life. Everyone bows to the devotees who surrender themselves totally to the Guru's words. Such disciples practice fidelity to the Guru. They never get angry but are tolerant to others' anger. They are sweet and humble by nature. They consider all the disciples of the Guru to be better than themselves.

They respect other women as they would their mother and sister and love all boys as their sons. They make an honest living and are satisfied with their own earnings. They share with the needy and are kind to the poor and ignorant. They firmly and sincerely follow their routine of worship. They meditate on the '*Gurbani*', 24 hours a day and contribute one-tenth of their income (*daswandh*) in the name of Guru.

STANZA FOUR

Accept the Will of the Lord

The Guru's disciples, while sitting in the assembly of devotees absorb the '*Gurbani*' through all their senses. Their mind becomes one with *Gurbani* and accept the Will of the Lord, thereby, gradually reducing their ego. They realize that they are the lowest of the lowly and that all the glory belongs to the *Satguru* and they should use this transient body of theirs to do as much good as possible. Then only will their life be worthwhile. The Guru's word is the cup of nectar that enables the devotees to endure austerities, control anger and desires, practice yoga and dispassion. It makes them sweet natured, humble, honest and generous.

As they see the Guru's form in everybody, they make no enemies, don't plot against anybody and are not vindictive. They are especially devoted to persons who follow the Guru's precepts. They are confident that the Lord will fulfil all their needs and therefore they request only Him and do not extend their hands towards anybody else for help.

STANZA FIVE

Humility and Discrimination

When one becomes the disciple of Sikh Gurus, one's life changes in obvious as well as in subtle ways. One has to be constantly aware of one's emotions so as not to allow anger and desires to influence him. One should constantly guard against any slip ups, as following the Guru's path is like walking on a sword's edge. The accumulated negativities of many births are dispelled by the grace of saints. One who has not yet renounced his ego cannot become Guru's true disciple.

The true disciples get rid of their desires like oil that is pressed out of seeds in the oil press. They develop their sense of discrimination, which allows them to differentiate between truth and falsehood just like the royal swan, which can separate milk from water. They become firm in Divine Knowledge and while reciting the *Gurbani*, they renounce their ego, false pride, attributes, etc. This happens because they realize that the human body is perishable and hence they renounce the bodily pleasures.

The true disciples collect the precious pearls of the Lord's Name, charity, purity, dispassion etc from the ocean of *Gurbani*. Knowing that the world is perishable they do not accept anything from anybody other than from the Supreme Being. They treat *Gurbani* as the form of Unmanifested Lord and the assembly of devotees as the Lord's Dwelling, and therefore they visit the *Gurudwara* regularly.

Once they take *Gurbani* to heart, they merge with the Lord. From then on they are filled with Divine Fervour and

are like a dumb person who is not able to describe the taste of sweets. Having been thus blessed with the Divine Knowledge they are fully satiated.

STANZA SIX

Deep Love of Guru's Lotus Feet

When the disciples meditate on the Guru's lotus feet, they drink the nectar of his teachings, '*charanamrit*' (the water in which the Guru's feet have been washed). While in deep meditation they are intoxicated with the essence of *Gurbani* just like the sunflower, which blooms only when the sun comes out and follows its direction throughout the day. Their hearts glow with divinity when contemplating on the Guru's lotus feet. The gentle lady disciples are likened to the beautiful moon faced flower as they think of the Guru's lotus feet as the moon. Their hearts glow and murmur with joy like a black bee (*bhanwara*), which sustains itself on nectar. When the devotees contemplate on the Guru's lotus feet they don't need the light of the sun and the moon to show them the path. They are all aglow with the pleasure of having attained the nectar of the Guru's feet (*charanamrit*).

Such disciples are blessed with the powers to weed out ignorance from the minds of other devotees. They overcome their tendencies to worship graves, tombs etc and can discriminate against knowledge and actions that are of worldly nature. This can be likened to the disappearance of stars when the sun rises. The disciples are then in a state of permanent bliss.

STANZA SEVEN

Guru's Teachings – A Great Uniting Force

With his mercy on humankind the Guru has made all the four social classes as one. Once a person becomes a devotee he automatically becomes pure irrespective of his class. Bhai Saheb has explained this with the example of

the betel leaf (*paan*), which contains white lime paste, grey catechu, yellowish areca pieces and the green betel leaf. When one chews such a prepared betel leaf it produces a uniform red color. Similarly, the four social classes of the Hindus i.e. *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishas* and *Shudras*, all become *Khalsa* (pure).

The Guru's word is like the philosopher's stone that has the power of turning everything it touches into gold. The *Gurbani* converts the people from the four social classes, the four stages of life i.e. eight walks of life to "*Atam Gyanis*" (those who know the Truth). Such liberated souls, when in physical body, function like other human beings but they do not possess body consciousness. They are always one with the Supreme Being. They are absorbed in Him once they leave the body.

A Guru's disciple blessed with Guru's word and scent of the Guru's precepts can liberate any sinner and convert him into a spiritual person with his teachings and influence. Thus, such disciples who have drunk the '*charanamrit*' are invaluable as rare precious pearls. The Guru's disciples absorb his teachings and produce pearls of wisdom for the liberation of sinners. They develop psychic qualities like clairvoyance etc and are always in bliss of the enjoyment of spiritual oneness with the Supreme Being.

STANZA EIGHT

The Extent of Devotion of the Gurmukhs

The Guru oriented devotees, when they sit in the company of saints ("*sadhu sangat*"), get completely absorbed in the *Gurbani* and enjoy the intoxicating effect of the love of the Lord in this state. Their condition is like that of the Indian red legged partridge ('*chakore*') who waits for the nectar rays of the moon or that of the male peacock who dances on hearing the thundering clouds, or that of the honey bees who hover on the flowers to collect the nectar.

Just like we cannot predict the movements of the fish in

the ocean, the mental and spiritual state of the *Gurmukhs* is beyond assessment. The *Gurmukhs* know what is beyond the scope of human knowledge and assessment and thus can put up with that what is beyond the capacity of ordinary human beings.

These *Gurmukhs* have transcended the three qualities of *Maya* i.e. *Satwik*, *Rajsik* and *Tamsik* states. They are in the fourth state i.e. *Turia* or beyond *Maya*. This is due to the greatness of the Lord, the Supreme Being.

STANZA NINE

Dedication to the Master (Guru)

A very high level of dedication is required of a devotee towards his Master or *Satguru*. Bhai Gurdas has given us a few examples of extreme devotion from nature.

1. The tortoise lays and buries its eggs on the sandy bank but itself lives in the water. The eggs hatch due to its continuous thought towards its eggs and when hatched, the babies are drawn towards the mother in the water.
2. When the Siberian cranes lay their eggs, they are hatched due to the continuous thought towards the eggs. When hatched, they take the babies and fly away.
3. The duck lays its eggs near a hen who hatches its eggs. When the eggs are hatched, the duck comes and leads the chicks to the water. The ducklings wade into the water with the duck and the chickens start foraging for food in the litter with the hen.

This explains the state of high souls who are born and brought up as ordinary people but suddenly change into highly Self-realized souls on meeting their Mentor. (For example, Swami Vivekanand became a great Swami from an ordinary worldly boy called Narayan on meeting Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna.)

4. The Indian cuckoo lays its eggs in the crow's nest, but as soon as they are hatched, the cuckoo comes and takes the babies away.
5. The babies of the royal swan do not find their food in the ordinary pool and have to finally go to the Mansarover lake (in Tibet) where they find the pearls. Similarly, the potential saints gravitate to their destinations, as they are not satisfied with the worldly surroundings.

The great Gurus have therefore devised the system of the assembly of saints or "*sadhu sangat*" where the true devotees can find the spiritual food and can be dispassionate towards *Maya*. The *Gurmukhs* are aware of the past, present and future. Thus, they are omniscient. Yet they are humble and do not let anybody know about their true state. Nobody other than the Lord is aware of their beautiful, spiritual state.

STANZA TEN

What is so Special About the Guru's Sikhs ?

In this stanza Bhai Gurdas has explained how the devotees are always in an exalted state or "*Turia*" or the fourth state that is beyond *Maya*. They can do more good than the philosopher's stone, *bawan chandan* tree or the holy rivers put together.

'*Bawan chandan*' is a sandal wood tree, which is so fragrant that all the trees around it become sandalwood and start spreading fragrance. The *bawan chandan* does not bear any fruit but is priceless for its power to convert other trees into sandalwood. The changed trees cannot convert other trees into sandalwood, but a *Gurmukh* who is blessed by his Guru can change other people and turn them into *Gurmukhs* like him.

Even if the herons go to Mansarover lake, they cannot change into royal swans. Similar is the case with the world-

oriented people because they are still absorbed in the world and the three qualities of *Maya*. This is true for the imposters who pretend to be *Gurmukhs*.

STANZA ELEVEN

The Guru can Elevate the Devotee to be the Guru

Guru Nanak Dev elevated Bhai Lehna as Guru Angad Dev and Guru Angad Dev made Bhai Amardas the next Guru. Thus, the deserving disciples can become the Guru by the Guru's grace.

A *Gurmukh* is always in the fourth state i.e. *Turia* (beyond the three '*gunas*' or the qualities of *Maya*). Other than the Saints and the *Gurmukhs*, the whole world is in these three states. The yogis (practitioners of Hath Yoga) are in the state of *Turia* only till they are in the state of *samadhi*.

Iron that is changed into gold is as good as any other gold; the *neem* tree which is very bitter becomes sandal wood under the influence of '*bawan chandan*'. Similarly, the worst of criminals change into exalted saints under the influence of *Gurmukh*, like Valmiki, a dacoit who became a great sage (and wrote '*Ramayana*') under the influence of Sage Narada.

Any river, which joins the Ganges also becomes holy. A crow can become a swan, but rarely does a swan ('*hans*') become '*Paramahansa*' i.e. an ascetic of the highest order. An ordinary person can become a saint but becoming a Guru is a rare occurrence. A *Paramahansa* is one who has the power of discrimination and such a power is bestowed upon a disciple by the rare grace of the Guru.

STANZA TWELVE

The Final Ascent of the Saints to Heights of Spirituality

In this stanza, Bhai Gurdas has explained that after the initial life as ordinary people, the saints at the appropriate time rise to heights of spirituality without any impression

of their earlier lives on their souls.

A newly hatched tortoise easily takes to the water without any fear; a baby crane is able to soar to great heights with its mother. This is very similar to the "*Shunya Samadhi*" practiced by saints. The babies of the royal swan play fearlessly in the Mansarovar Lake, a very spiritual place as great sages have meditated on its banks since time immemorial. All this happens because they have the Guru's protection and guidance.

The Indian cuckoo and the duck retrieve their babies from the crow and hen respectively just as Lord Krishna was united with his father Sri Vasudeva after growing up with the Yadavas in Vrindavan. Similarly, once the Gursikhs imbibe Gurbani and become "*Jiwan Muktas*" or Self-realized souls, they never go back to their ignorant self. Instead, they live honest and frugal lives and humbly serve the needy.

At this stage the disciples of Bhai Gurdas eagerly wanted to know whether persons having the qualities described by him in the foregoing stanzas were actually living among them. In answer to this query Bhai Gurdas has listed in the stanzas 13 to 31 the names of all the great souls who were transformed from ordinary worldly persons into great saints as a result of coming into contact with Guru Nanak Dev and his successors.

The following chapters deal with thus mentioned saints individually. Their stories were told by Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, to Bhai Mani Singh, who recorded them in his book "*Sikhan Di Bhagat Mala*". I have made an humble effort to translate them into English for the benefit of the English-speaking devotees.

Chapter 2

The Disciples of Sri Guru Nanak Dev

The Importance of Purity of Mind for Reflecting God-Like Qualities

2.1 *Bhai Taru Popat*

Bhai Taru Popat was only around twelve years old when he met Guru Nanak Dev . He expressed a desire to surrender himself to Guru ji as he had learned that total surrender brings peace of mind. On hearing this Guru ji asked him what was the hurry to renounce all as he was so young, he had not even tasted the worldly pleasures? To this Bhai Taru replied that when he observed his mother light the stove using small twigs and big pieces of wood he noticed that the small twigs burned first. So he assumed that death too would take the young first. Therefore he did not have much time to waste and wanted to save his soul as soon as possible from the cycle of birth and death.

Guru Nanak Dev was so pleased with this answer that he blessed him saying, "O Taru, you will be the savior of your whole dynasty. Earn an honest income and share it with the needy, meditate on 'Waheguru' as you inhale and exhale. Protect your mind from anger, jealousy etc and keep it pure".

Then Guru Nanak Dev gave the following illustration:

A king once made a beautiful temple and installed idols studded with jewels. On the wall opposite the idols he placed a highly polished large opal stone. The stone was so

skillfully polished that it reflected the idols just like a mirror. Thus the mind, which is free from negative emotions and is very pure, is capable of reflecting the qualities of the Lord.

Bhai Taru Popat henceforth meditated on the Lord, worked honestly and served the other devotees. He became a great saint of his time.

If You Shield Others the Lord Will Shield You

2.2 *Bhai Moola Keer*

When Bhai Moola Keer met Guru Nanak Dev, he was living recklessly. Guru ji advised him to stop drinking, gambling and womanizing. He showed him the way of a true devotee. Bhai Moola followed Guru ji's instructions and changed. He began to associate with the assembly of devotees '*Sadhu Sangat*' and immersed himself in the kirtan of '*Gurbani*'. He made an honest income and served all the Guru's devotees with love.

A thief heard of Bhai Moola's generosity and planned to cheat him. He memorized '*Gurbani*' and gained entry into Bhai Moola's house and heart, pretending to be a great devotee of Guru Nanak Dev. While enjoying the hospitality, the thief found out that the family jewels were kept in a box in the bedroom. One night he crept into the bedroom and stole the box. However, as he tried to leave the house he found the front door locked. He hid the box near the door and woke up Bhai Moola to open the door on the pretext of going to the fields for toilet. When he was told of the toilet facility in the house, he still insisted on visiting the fields. Not wanting to annoy a guest, Bhai Moola opened the door to let him go out. As the thief was picking up the jewel box it fell down. Bhai Moola quietly picked up the box and handed it to the thief and allowed him to go.

The next morning when his wife found her jewels missing, Bhai Moola quietly took her aside and narrated

the incident of the previous night and later bought new jewels for her. When Guru Nanak Dev heard about this incident he was very pleased with his magnanimity and blessed him thus "Just like you have kept the secret of one who deceived you by pretending to be my disciple, the Lord too will keep all your secrets. Treat the Guru's words as your Guru and meditate on them as your true master 'Satguru'. May God bless you."

Bhai Moola Keer followed Guru ji's instructions and lived to become a highly revered saint.

Worship the Unmanifest Aspect of the Lord

2.3 Bhai Pirtha and Bhai Khera

Bhai Pirtha and Bhai Khera belonged to a Soni Kshatriya family. They met Guru Nanak Dev at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) while he was giving a discourse explaining the meaning of 'Gurbani'. They were mesmerized by Guru ji's words. At the end of the discourse Guru ji asked them to express any desires they had to which they prayed "O savior of the helpless, always keep us under your protection, take away our desires, bless us with devotion and always keep us under your protective umbrella".

Answering their request Guru ji asked them to always serve the saints and devotees with all their resources and visit *dharamshalas*, as they would find him present in the assembly of saints. They would be under his protection when they made an honest living and shared it with the needy.

Guru Nanak Dev explained that one should be attached to his word, which is his unmanifest form rather than to his body or his manifest form. If the devotees are attached to the Guru's body, they will have to face the grief of separation when he is not physically present. But if they focus on his word ('Gurbani'), they would never be separated from him, as it is Eternal.

Note: *Ashtpadi* 16 of *Sukhmani Sahib* explains this aspect in greater detail.

True Significance of *Namaz* and *Rozas*

2.4 *Bhai Mardana Rababi*

One day Guru Nanak Dev was sitting at Talwandi Rai Bhoi (Nankana Sahib, now in Pakistan) when a professional musician came and played on his *rabab* (a stringed instrument) and sang pure Hindustani *ragas* (musical notes). Guru ji was enthralled and impressed by the musician and on inquiring about him found out that he was Dana belonging to the *Mirasi* caste, a community of singers and jesters in Punjab. Guru ji complimented him on his skill and knowledge of *ragas*. He asked him to play the '*rabab*' only in the praise of the Lord and in return promised him success in this as well as the next world. At this Bhai Dana replied that he was a poor man and earned his livelihood by playing for the rich patrons. As for earning the blessings in the next world, he offered '*namaz*' five times a day and also observed thirty '*roz*as'. If he stopped playing for money his family would go hungry.

Guru ji then explained to him that it was God who was feeding him and his family. It is God who takes care of the entire world. Therefore he should get rid of his mistaken assumption. Then Guru ji asked him to explain the real significance of the *Namaz* and *Rozas*. Bhai Dana was not able to explain its significance but only knew that the *Namaz* is offered five times a day and the *Rozas* come once every year. Then Guru ji asked him if he knew where the *Namaz* and *Rozas* were at other times? Bhai Dana replied that they were at God's house but he had not seen it.

Guru Nanak Dev told him that God lived in the hearts of saints and saints live in the heart of God as saints meditate on God with each breath. Therefore *Namaz* resides in the hearts of saints. The saints have no desires and eat frugally

therefore the *Rozas* reside in their hearts. So those who accompany the saints are blessed with contentment. Guru ji told Bhai Dana that when God would ask him about his good deeds i.e. if he had shared his wealth with the needy, if he remembered God with every breath {twenty four thousand times per day} he would not be able to give any answer but would only hang his head in shame. Then, when the angels would beat him and he would turn to the prophets and saints for help, they would not be able to help him as he never meditated on the Lord's name inspite of their prodding. Then, when he would turn to his family members for help he would find that they were also in the same boat. Finally he would be imprisoned in a dark cell and be forced to repent for his sins.

Guru ji promised him that if he became Mardana from Dana, meditated on His Name '*Waheguru*' and devoted his life to singing praises of the Lord while keeping the company of saints, he would be spared from such a horrible fate and be released from the miserable cycle of life and death. Mardana bowed to Guru Nanak Dev ji's will and agreed to accompany him on his mission of mercy and awakening the world from the slumber of ignorance. Guru ji promised to look after his family and relatives.

Guru Nanak Dev then recited the following:

*"Panj Niwaja wakhat panj panja panje Nau,
Pahila Sach halal dui tija khair Khudai,
Chauthi niyat raas mun pajawi sifit sanai,
Karni kalma akh ke tan Musلمان sadai,
Nanak jete kuria kure koori pai".*

i.e. there are five *Namazes* observed at five times, all these are the Names of God. The first thing to be observed is Truth; the second is honest earning; the third is to wish well for all and share one's earnings with the needy; the fourth is to keep one's mind clean and have faith in the Lord; the fifth is to remember God with every breath; and the sixth is to perform good deeds.

This is the true precept (*Kalma*) and by observing this only, can one be called a Musalman. Thus, Bhai Mardana became Guru ji's disciple and companion for life and accompanied him everywhere. Finally upon his death Guru ji performed his last rites himself.

The Meaning of Satwik and Rajsik Austerities

2.5 Bhai Prithimal and Rama Didi

Bhai Prithimal and Rama Didi were two great saints blessed by Guru Nanak Dev. On their first meeting, they requested Guru ji to show them an easy path to enable them to merge in Lord Vishnu. Guru Nanak Dev ji told them about three types of austerities i.e.

- 1) Tamsik austerities. It is like staying naked in winter and summer, starving oneself, sitting in water etc, or causing oneself extreme physical discomfort. These are again of two types. One is to perform these austerities with specific desires in mind. This results in attainment of '*Siddhies*' and '*Riddhies*'. The second is to perform these austerities without any desires, which results in purification of the mind.

But these austerities are very difficult and do not guarantee ridding oneself of anger and desires. Guru ji advised them to follow Satvik or Rajsik austerities, which he has explained as under.

- 2) Rajsik austerities. It means controlling of one's senses i.e. restraining the eyes from seeing wrong, ears from hearing falsehoods, tongue from backbiting, hands from theft and evil deeds and the feet from going to undesirable places. Instead, the eyes should be used for seeing saints and reading holy books, the tongue should be used to praise the Lord, the hands should be used to serve the saints and give charity and the feet should lead one to *Gurudwaras* and the abode of saints.

- 3) Satvik austerities. Guru ji explained that when one sits in meditation, various thoughts arise and the mind wavers. One should then make all efforts to bring the mind back from the desires to meditation. One should not tire of this effort. Guru ji likened this to feeding medicine to a horse. When the horse keeper puts the medicine in the horse's mouth, the horse spits it out. The keeper continues to keep his hand in the horse's mouth till it swallows the medicine and thereby recovers from his illness. If the keeper had lost heart and not persisted in feeding the medicine, the horse would not have become healthy. Similarly, the mind also tries all the tricks in its bag and swings from thought to thought. It needs great effort and stamina on one's part to stay focused on meditation. Once the mind stops fluctuating, one enjoys peace and bliss.

The two devotees accepted and acted on Guru ji's advice. When they served saints and meditated on Gurbani, they realized that when the Holy Word sinks into the heart via the mind, one attains freedom from the cycle of birth and death. All their family members were also liberated along with them by the grace of Guru Nanak Dev.

Rise Above Body Consciousness

2.6 Daulat Khan Lodhi

Daulat Khan Lodhi was the *Nawab* of Sultanpur Lodhi (near Jalandhar). Guru Nanak Dev's brother-in-law Bhai Jairam (husband of Bibi Nanaki) was in charge of his stores. On his recommendation, Daulat Khan Lodhi appointed Guru Nanak Dev to be in charge of the ration shop. When the weights were placed before Guru ji, he saluted the quarter seer weight saying that it is the smallest and humblest weight, therefore worthy of praise. It is like the feet, thought to be the lowest part of the body and yet it is only the feet,

which are worshipped and no other part of the body.

Guru Nanak Dev would offer food and clothes to all the holy people visiting Sultanpur. As estimated by the others, Guru ji's expenses on charities became exorbitant. One day, Daulat Khan's minister reported the matter to him and said that Guru Nanak Dev was spending on charities five times more than what is spent by Khan on his army. Daulat Khan summoned Bhai Jairam and ordered an audit of the ration shop. The audit revealed that everything was in order and even ten thousand rupees were due to Guru Nanak Dev. Then Daulat Khan said that the person in charge of the ration shops appeared to be an exalted soul and that he should be made his minister. Guru ji declined the offer and left the services of the *Nawab*. From then on he started spending all his time in the company of saints.

One day when Daulat Khan sent for Guru Nanak Dev, it was time for prayers. So the *Nawab* and his '*Qazi*' (officer in charge of justice and religion) began to offer the *Namaz*. While they were praying Guru ji began to smile. The *Qazi* noticed it and complained to the *Nawab* that Guru ji was making fun of their prayers. Guru ji explained that while both were going through the motions of praying, their minds were not on God. The *Qazi* was worried about his newly born calf falling into the well. Therefore God had not accepted their prayers and since the *Qazi* was leading the prayers, he was the culprit.

Daulat Khan Lodhi was impressed and convinced that Guru Nanak Dev was an exalted soul and a prophet who should be worshipped. The *Qazi* immediately objected saying that if he was a real prophet then he should convert to Islam.

One day Guru Nanak Dev went to the river for a bath accompanied by a companion. When he dived into the water he did not come out. The companion reported the drowning of Guru ji to his brother-in-law, Bhai Jairam and *Nawab* Daulat Khan. They tried their best to find him by sending divers with fishing nets but to no avail.

After eight days, Guru Nanak Dev appeared upstream. When the *Nawab* and the *Qazi* went to meet him, the *Qazi* remarked that the Guru ji must be a magician and that the *Nawab* was mistaken about his holiness. Then the *Nawab* inquired whether Guru Nanak Dev was a Hindu or a Muslim, Guru Nanak Dev replied

"Koi akhe bhutna, koi kahe betala.

Koi akhe aadmi Nanak bechara.

Bhaia diwana Shah ka Nanak baurana.

Hau Hari bin awar na jana."

Guru Nanak Dev said that this body was composed of five elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether). Some one said that he was an apparition; some said he was a ghost and others said that he was a man. After the saints gave him Divine Knowledge, he considered himself a witness to this body. The body consciousness, which was with him since his birth had now gone. He was firm in the conviction that he was the '*Atma*' or the soul and that there was no distinction between him and the Supreme Being. He and the Supreme Being were like the water and its' waves. Since he was convinced about this instruction by his Supreme Teacher (the Lord), he did not recognize anything but the Supreme Being. It was the body, which was Hindu or Muslim. He was the witness to his body and hence separate from the body.

Nawab Daulat Khan, on hearing this, bowed before Guru ji and said that he recognized Guru Nanak Dev as the prophet of the Supreme Being. He said that he had but one desire, which was to see the *Khwaja Peer* (angel of waters) as he had heard that *Khwaja Peer* was an eternal sage since the earth and sky were destructible, the air and water were permanent.

Guru Nanak Dev told him that, if the *Nawab* so desired, he could elevate Khan himself to be the *Khwaja Peer*. *Nawab* Daulat Khan replied that though Guru ji was capable of doing anything, he was desirous of having at least one glimpse of the *Peer* himself.

Guru Nanak Dev advised the *Nawab* to meditate. He said that all the elements like earth, sky, water, fire and ether had the power of '*Atma*' (the Spirit) and that he was also the '*Atma*'.

The *Nawab* tried to meditate, but was not able to do so for a long period of time. So he requested Guru ji for help. Guru ji asked him to try and continue the meditation. He asked the *Nawab* to concentrate on the tip of his nose (the middle of the eyebrows or the '*Ajna Chakra*') and to bring back his concentration as soon as it drifts away. Guru ji assured him of his blessings in this effort and that he would have a glimpse of *Khwaja Peer* in the night.

After about nine hours, early in the morning, *Khwaja Peer* appeared in a vision to the Khan. The room became brightly lit as the *Peer* appeared holding two vessels brimming with jewels. First he bowed to Guru Nanak Dev and offered him the jewels. Guru ji informed the Khan about the arrival of the *Peer* who then bowed before him. Guru spoke to the *Peer* telling him that henceforth Daulat Khan would be the King of the Water Kingdom. The *Peer* immediately expressed his happiness and was ready to serve him or Guru ji, as he desired. Nawab Daulat Khan said that as the *Peer* was an expert in the management of the water kingdom so he should continue his good work as his minister.

Guru ji then declared that Nawab Daulat Khan would continue in the world for another five years and then would join the *Peer* on leaving the earthly body. So the *Peer* should continue to work as his minister and after five years both would merge with the Supreme Being.

The Nawab was thoroughly devoted to Guru ji and spread his message all over Punjab.

Control of the Mind and Senses is the Highest Austerity

2.7 *Bhai Malo and Bhai Manga*

Bhai Malo and Bhai Manga were very devoted disciples of

Guru Nanak Dev. They used to give discourses explaining the God's word and sing His praises in *kirtan*. One day they prayed to Guru Nanak Dev and asked him to bless them so that they may attain self-realization.

Guru Nanak Dev told them about '*Tamsik Tapas*' or hard austerities. In this the aspirants sit inside fires, in the water, in extreme cold, observe fasts, live at holy places, roam about from place to place and live on roots and fruits to attain self-realization. Though this method is very difficult and tough on the human body and might result in the aspirant attaining some psychic powers, it does not result in the attainment of Divine Wisdom or Knowledge.

However, if one can control one's senses, and make the mind free of desires, spend one's time in listening to and singing the praises of the Lord, one then gains much more as compared to the earlier method.

Bhai Malo appeared a little confused and confessed that he was under the impression that the harder the labour the sweeter the fruit. And how was it that an easier and more comfortable practice of controlling the senses and mind brought greater gains.

Guru Nanak Dev ji then explained that people doing hard labor were generally illiterate and earned less. For example, a woodcutter or a potter worked very hard and for long hours but earned much less than a shopkeeper. The cloth merchants or jewellers worked even less, but the profits were higher. They led very comfortable lives and even their servants were well paid and learnt special skills like scrutiny of jewels and precious stones and pearls. Therefore, just doing hard labour was not enough to make a good living. Similarly, subjecting the body to hardships did not automatically endow one with Divine Knowledge. But those who controlled their senses, mind and sang the praise of the Lord were blessed with firm faith, devotion and Divine knowledge.

Both Bhai Malo and Manga were convinced by Guru ji's words. Bhai Malo spread Guru ji's word by explaining

his compositions (*katha*) from *Pothi Sahib* (a book in which Guru Nanak Dev's compositions were recorded). And Bhai Manga would sit and listen with a focused mind. Then both would sing the compositions (*kirtan*). They performed the *katha* and *kirtan* with so much devotion and love that all those who listened to them were deeply influenced and turned towards spirituality. In this way the two great souls were responsible for their own liberation as well as that of many others.

Who is Guru Oriented? (*Sanmukh*)

2.8 Bhai Kalu Khatri

Bhai Kalu Khatri came to Guru Nanak Dev as he wanted an answer to his question, "Who is Guru oriented?" Guru ji replied that he who shies away from sins and acquires virtues is Guru oriented or *Sanmukh*. Such a person should very carefully listen to the Guru's instructions and also be aware of his own state of mind. He then explained that there were four states of mind, which should be possessed by a Guru oriented person.

1. 'Maitri' or Friendship: In this state of mind, a person realizes that all the good things and happiness are not only for him and that he will get only as much as is due to him as per his '*karma*' or fate.

He considers all beings as his friends and their happiness as his own. Such a person shares his wealth, knowledge and any skill that he possesses for other's well being. This state of mind is called '*maitri*' or friendship.

2. 'Karuna' or Compassion: In this state of mind, if one finds others deficient in wealth, knowledge, skill, education or powers, he treats them like his own sons or younger siblings and tries to bring them up in life. Yet, there is no sign of ego in this regard. This is called compassion.

3. 'Mudta' or Appreciation: In this state of mind, if one finds others higher than oneself in status, wealth, education or skills, he is thankful to the Lord for creating such high souls too. To put it simply, one should be as happy to hear the greatness and good of others as he is when he hears about the greatness and good of his father or Guru. One should never talk ill or gossip about others. This is called '*mudta*' or appreciation of others.
4. 'Upekha' or Disregard: One should teach others according to the instructions of the guru or according to one's own self acquired knowledge. One should pursue only such pupils who accept, take interest in and follow the instructions. Those who do not take interest or accept or purposefully argue and belittle the instructions should be disregarded or ignored and left alone. One should not persist with such persons, as the deep understanding required for this knowledge is not in their '*karma*' or fate. This is '*upekha*'.

Bhai Kalu and his disciples faithfully followed these four states of mind and were liberated.

'Waheguru' Name is the Giver of the Four Boons

2.8 Bhai Seehan and Bhai Gajan

Bhai Seehan and Bhai Gajan were first cousins. They came to meet Guru Nanak Dev, and asked for his blessings to be liberated from the cycle of births and deaths. They also wanted to be blessed in this life itself with the four boons i.e.

1. *Dharma*, fulfilment of all worldly responsibilities.
 2. *Artha*, the worldly wealth.
 3. *Kama*, fulfilment of worldly desires and
 4. *Moksha*, liberation from the cycle of birth and death,
- Guru Nanak Dev told them that the Lord's or the Supreme

Being's Name was 'Waheguru'. If they meditated and repeated this Name, they would be gifted with all the four boons. Hearing this they were curious to know about the meaning of the name 'Waheguru'.

Guru Nanak Dev explained that 'Wahe' is the expression of exclamation on seeing something wonderful and beyond human understanding. The Supreme Being created the universe, humans, the animals, vegetation etc, but we are not able to see or visualize the Creator himself. This is the wonder. 'Go' means the darkness or ignorance i.e. not to be able to see or visualize the Creator is the ignorance. 'Ru' is the light, which expels darkness. Thus, it is the Supreme Being who removes our darkness of ignorance and helps us to comprehend the Lord or the Creator of the universe. Hence, He is known as 'Waheguru'.

The duo then asked, how would mere recitations of the name 'Waheguru' bestow upon them the four boons? Guru Nanak Dev explained thus:

1. When we go to meet the assembly of saints or '*sadhu sangat*', every step is equal to the fruits of 100 '*Ashvamedha Yagnas*' (horse sacrifice). This is '*Dharma*' or the fulfilment of spiritual and worldly responsibilities.
2. The worldly people work tirelessly and run after worldly possessions. But it comes automatically to the devotees of the Lord as people come to them on their own with offerings. This meets the need of '*Artha*' or wealth.
3. The desires of the devotees are fulfilled by the Lord Himself when His name is meditated upon. This is the accomplishment of '*kama*' or desires.
4. When the name 'Waheguru' is understood and it's meaning finally seeps into the body, mind and intellect, one is blessed with '*Brahma Gyan*' or the Divine Knowledge. This will grant one '*mukti*' or liberation.

Hearing these words of wisdom, both Bhai Seehan and Bhai Gajan would wake up early in the morning, bathe,

recite the '*Gurbani*' i.e. Guru Nanak Dev's compositions and then go to work. All day long they would meditate on '*Wahe*' while inhaling and on '*Guru*' while exhaling. Thus, they were continuously reciting the name '*Waheguru*' all the time. They would also offer food to the disciples of the Guru ji out of their earnings. The other devotees were also aware of the generosity of the duo.

It so happened, Bhai Seehan's daughter's marriage was fixed and the groom and his people were to arrive the next day. Delicious food was cooked for the marriage feast. In the evening before the marriage, a large number of Guru Nanak Dev's devotees on their way to meet Guru ji stopped at Bhai Seehan's house. They were tired and hungry. Bhai Seehan humbly offered them the food prepared for the marriage. This worried his wife very much. Bhai Seehan was however unperturbed and said that since the food was served to Guru ji's disciples, Guru ji himself would save his honour.

The marriage party duly arrived the next morning. The lady of the house was extremely worried, but Bhai Seehan was unshakeable in his faith. He offered his prayers and unlocked the door to the room where the food was kept. Lo and behold! it was full of food fit for the king. The guests enjoyed the feast for full five days. The groom and his people, overwhelmed with Bhai Seehan's hospitality, happily left with the bride. This shows how undoubting faith in '*Waheguru*' fulfills all our desires and needs.

Note: Mary Pat Fisher in her book '*Everyday miracles in the house of God*' has narrated such an incident at Shiv Sadan; home of Baba Virsa Singh in chapter 11 on page 99 which illustrates the power of faith.

Kali Sweeps the Floors of Guru Nanak Dev

2.9 Chaudhary Bhagirath

Chaudhary (the village head) of Malsihan village was a devotee of Goddess '*Kali*', and respected all holy people.

When Guru Nanak Dev visited Malsihan village, Chaudhary Bhagirath devotedly served him. At night he would sleep where Guru ji was sleeping. Early in the morning when Guru ji got up for prayers, Bhagirath went to fetch water for his bath. When he was returning with the buckets of water from the well, he noticed a beautiful lady with eight arms sweeping the floor with a broom. Bhagirath inquired who she was and why she had come from her house so early. She replied that she was the Goddess *Kali*. Bhagirath at once fell at her feet and prayed. He then asked her why was it that she being the mother of the whole world, supporter of all Gods and destroyer of the demons was sweeping the floors of Guru Nanak Dev's room? She replied that this holy person was none other than the Unmanifest aspect of the Supreme Being himself, whereas she was the Manifest aspect and her powers were derived from the services of saints like Guru Nank Dev.

On hearing this, Bhagirath became a disciple of Guru ji and devoted his life to the service of saints and meditation on '*Waheguru*'. He was thus liberated from the cycle of life and death.

Hath Yoga and Bhakti Yoga

2.10 *Bhai Ajita Randhawa*

When Bhai Ajita Randhawa came to Guru Nanak Dev, he said that he had been to a number of saints but none had been able to clear his doubts and requested Guru ji to clarify them so that his mind may be at peace.

Guru ji told him that there were two methods for achieving peace of mind. *Vedas* and *sages* have advised that one should follow the method that is suited to one's mind. Bhai Ajita then requested Guru ji to explain the two methods and promised to do his best to follow them.

Guru Nanak Dev ji said the two remedies were:

1. *Hath Yoga*
2. *Bhakti Yoga*

On further request Guru ji explained both of these methods.

1. Hath Yoga. Hath Yoga has eight stages or parts.

1. Yama
2. Niyama
3. Seclusion
4. Asanas or postures
5. Pranayama or breath control
6. Dhyana or concentration of mind
7. Dharna or making the mind single pointed
8. Samadhi or state of trance or deep meditation

On hearing this, Bhai Ajita said that he being a simple peasant did not understand these terms and requested for an explanation. Guru ji explained thus:

1. Yama. These consist of ten practices. They are:

- 1) Renounce violence. There are three kinds of violence:
 - a) Violence of mind i.e. thinking ill of someone.
 - b) Violence of speech i.e. speaking ill of someone.
 - c) Violence of action i.e. doing physical harm to someone.

Renunciation of these three kinds of violence is called 'Ahimsa' or non-violence.

- 2) To know the Lord or *Paramatma* as the Truth.
- 3) Renounce theft. There are two types of theft:
 - a) Physical theft i.e. to steal somebody's goods and hide them.
 - b) Theft by mind i.e. to commit sins of mind and then conceal them.
- 4) Celibacy. True celibacy means to win over our seven types of desires or actions. These are:
 - a) To talk about women.
 - b) To listen to the talks about women.
 - c) To sit with women in seclusion.
 - d) To look at a woman with lustful eyes.
 - e) To physically touch a woman
 - f) To dress like women.

- g) To commit sexual intercourse with a woman.

One must renounce all these activities to practice celibacy or '*Bhramacharaya*'.

- 5) Forgiveness. This means to tolerate all good and evil actions and words and endurance of all good and bad times with a smile on one's face.
- 6) Forbearance. To remain happy and satisfied in all kinds of circumstances and not to become restless or sad.
- 7) Compassion. To show concern and to help the needy as much as one can.
- 8) To possess a sensitive heart and never wish bad of anybody.
- 9) To take food with self control i.e. to eat one quarter less than needed.
- 10) Cleanliness of the body and mind i.e. to take bath regularly and to clean the mind of attachments and hatred.

2. Niyama. There are ten niyams or rules to be followed. They are:

- 1) Austerities or penances. There are three types of austerities i.e. '*Satwik*', '*Rajsik*' and '*Tamsik*'.
 - a) Tamsik austerities means to endure heat, cold, sit in water and to starve. Such austerities do give benefit in the form of '*siddhies*' but do not lead to Divine Knowledge.
 - b) Rajsik austerities means to control one's sense organs from evil actions and to divert them towards good and pious actions.
 - c) Satwik austerities are to divert one's mind from bad thoughts and actions to God's words or *Gurbani*.

One should follow Rajsik and Satwik austerities as these two lead to Divine Knowledge.

- 2) Contentment. Real contentment means that one

should remain happy whether one has got a thing or not. Under both circumstances, one should be grateful to 'Waheguru' since only He knows one's needs the best.

- 3) Faith. One must have full faith in his master's words.
- 4) Charity. Charity can be of wealth and knowledge. There are three types of charity. They are:
 - a) Tamsik charity. In this, the recipient is not treated with respect and the donor thinks that he is helping the recipient. This kind of charity gives little benefit to the donor.
 - b) Rajsik charity. In this type, the donor indulges in charity to enhance his prestige in the society. This also does not offer much benefit to the giver.
 - c) Satwik charity. In this type of charity, the donor does not make the recipient feel that he is doing him a favor by making the offering. This type of charity is most beneficial.
- 5) Devotion. Whatever one does, like praying, worshiping or serving it must be done with full devotion.
- 6) One must follow the precept of the master faithfully. He should not follow any other faith or belief or read or listen to any other matter against master's teachings.
- 7) One should be humble about one's knowledge and competence when dealing with others.
- 8) One should possess satwik bent of mind i.e. one should speak and behave humbly.
- 9) Follow the routine of prayers or *japa* strictly. One must not speak while practicing *japa*.
- 10) Oblation. This means making an offering in the sacrificial fire. This is done to please the Gods. The best way to offer oblation is to feed the hungry. This is because the God of mouth is fire

and any food given to the hungry and needy people is an offering to Him. The Lord is pleased when a hungry person on receiving food, utters the Name of the Lord.

The other type of oblation is called '*Gyan Hom*' or knowledge sacrifice. In this, we offer or sacrifice our enjoyments in the fire of knowledge as all the enjoyments and senses are temporary like the body. Only the Divine knowledge is permanent.

- 3) Seclusion. One should stay in a place where nobody else would disturb (in these times one should find a peaceful place in his own house itself).
- 4) Yogic Asanas or Postures. In yoga, there are 84 *asanas* based on the sitting posture of some of the 84 lakh creatures. The main two postures are
 - (a) *Padama asana* or lotus posture and (b) *Siddha asana* or ascetic posture.
 - a) In lotus posture, the left foot is placed on the right thigh and the right foot is placed on the left thigh. The arms are crossed behind the back and the big toes of the left and right foot are caught in the right and left hand.
Before assuming this posture, the earth is dug up to make it soft and some grass is spread over it to make a comfortable seat.
 - b) For '*siddha asana*' prepare a soft and comfortable seat like earlier. Sit with back straight, place left heel below the anus and the right foot over the left foot but over the reproductive organ.

In both of these postures, concentrate on the tip of the nose or in the middle of the eyebrows.

Note:

- (1) These *asanas* are meant for celibate persons. Married persons should practice these *asanas* with caution.

- (2) Lotus posture is not easy particularly for the aged. They can adopt any position of feet and legs that is comfortable, provided the back is straight.
- 5) Pranayam or Breath Control. The brain centers, which control our breathing and thinking affect each other. Breath control helps us to calm down our thought waves that can improve the quality of concentration in meditation.

Breath control has three parts. They are:

- a) Inhalation. Be fully aware of your breath. Inhale through the right nostril simultaneously concentrating on the middle of the eyebrows. Repeat 'IKONKAR' 12 times during inhalation.
- b) Retention. Now keep concentrating on the middle of the eyebrows and repeat 'IKONKAR' 3 times while retaining the breath.
- c) Exhalation. At the end of retention, exhale through the left nostril and repeat 'IKONKAR' 12 times while concentrating on the middle of the eyebrows.

Repeat the above process by inhaling through the left, retaining the breath and exhaling through the right nostril. Continue this alternate inhalation and exhalation through the left and the right nostril.

Note: A beginner should start with only 3 cycles of alternate inhalation, retention and exhalation. Increase the number gradually under expert guidance as too much *pranayama* may lead to complications like hallucinations etc.

By gradual progress in pranayama, the Ajna Chakra, which is located in the middle of the eyebrows opens and the prana stays in the tenth door i.e. the Sahasrara or the crown chakra. Then, mystical sounds are heard and the practitioner sees lights. The concentration on the mystical music improves its duration.

- 6) Dhayana or Concentration. This is also of two types:

- a) concentration on the manifest aspects of the Lord like the 4 armed Vishnu or a *mantra* given by the Master from 'Gurbani'.
 - b) Concentration on a chakra like the navel chakra, middle of the eyebrows or Ajna chakra or the heart chakra.
- 7) Dharana or Persistence. While meditating, the wandering thoughts will try to break the concentration. One has to persevere and bring back the mind to the object of concentration till one succeeds in completely eliminating the thoughts.
- 8) Samadhi or Deep Meditation. When the thought process completely subsides and concentration becomes continuous, it is called samadhi. This is also of two kinds:
- a) *Swikalp Samadhi*. In this case, the meditator, the object of meditation and the process of meditation are different entities i.e. the meditator is not one with the object of meditation like the Lord or a Mantra.
 - b) *Nirwikalp Samadhi*. In this samadhi, the meditator, the object of meditation and the process of meditation become one.

These are the eight limbs of 'Hath Yoga'. The practitioner of Hath Yoga may enjoy the meditation, and when free, should read the 'Gurbani' or the Guru's words given in the Guru Granth Sahib.

2. Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti yoga also has eight limbs. They are:

- 1) Yama. Always be humble and do not feel proud if you possess any good quality or knowledge.
- 2) Niyama. One must attend the assembly of saints ('*sadhu sangat*') and listen to *kirtan* (musical singing of 'Gurbani') and *katha* (explanation of Gurbani and the history of the Gurus and their Sikhs) with full concentration. If one can read, then

one should read *Gurbani*, otherwise listen to it being recited.

- 3) Solitude. One must feel the presence of '*Waheguru*' or the Lord everywhere and be firm in conviction that there is nothing except the Lord everywhere.
- 4) Asanas or postures. This is to fix one's mind in the Lord all the time.
- 5) Pranayama. In Bhakti yoga, the three parts of *pranayama* are:
 - a) Inhalation. It is to digest and preserve the instructions given by the master.
 - b) Retention. It is to always practice the instructions of the Master, which has been understood.
 - c) Exhalation. It is to renounce the undesirable qualities or actions as instructed by the Master.
- 6) Dhayana. When one sits to read or listen to the Master's instructions, one must concentrate one's mind fully on it and not permit other thoughts to arise,
- 7) Dharana. In case the mind begins to wander and other thoughts arise, one must persist in bringing back the Master's instructions to the mind.
- 8) Samadhi. If the mind stays on a Mantra or the Guru's words like *Gurbani* for some time, one should try to increase this duration by practice. When the mind stays on the Guru's words for full 24 hours, it is the perfect *samadhi*. This is of two types:
 - a) Swikalp Samadhi. In this type, one thinks that he is listening to the '*shabad*' or the Guru's word and he fully understands the meaning of it.
 - b) Nirwikalp Samadhi. In this type, one does not repeat or concentrate on a '*shabad*' but the mind stays on the true meaning or understanding of the '*shabad*' or '*mantra*' or

Guru's words.

These are the eight parts of 'Bhakti Yoga'. Bhai Ajita Randhawa, on hearing these prayed to Guru ji to bless him with the wisdom to accept Guru's will sweetly. Guru ji blessed him with this boon and said that many others will also be liberated along with him.

The Wise Child, Baba Budha

2.11 *Bhai Boora Budha*

As a child, Bhai Boora was grazing his cattle when he met Guru Nanak Dev. The child Boora offered Guru ji milk and requested that he may be blessed with wisdom to be liberated from the cycle of birth and death. Guru Nanak Dev asked the child as to who has put these wise thoughts into his mind. Bhai boora said that when the Mughal invaders came to their village, they cut all the crops standing in the fields without considering whether the crops were ripe or just grown to feed their horses. This led him to think that since no one was able to stop the mighty Mugals from destroying the crops, how could anybody hold the hands of messengers of Death. Death may come as easily to a child as to an old man. Hence, he was worried about his salvation.

Guru Nanak Dev smiled and said that although he was only a child, he spoke like a wise old man (*budha*). From then, he was called Bhai Budha. Guru ji promised that he would bless Bhai Budha with Divine Knowledge in His incarnation as the fourth Guru, Guru Ramdas. He blessed Bhai Buddha saying that his progeny would also be great saints.

Bhai Budha was a great saint and served as a faithful and trusted lieutenant to six Gurus. He had the honour and the privilege of anointing five Gurus i.e. Guru Angad Dev (second Guru) to Guru Hargobind Sahib (sixth Guru). When he died at a ripe age, Guru Hargobind Sahib personally

performed his last rites out of regard for his services to the Gurus.

Guru Nanak Dev told Bhai Budha that if he meditated on 'Waheguru' with single pointed dedication, he would be duly liberated. Bhai Budha further inquired as to the mode of meditation on Gurbani.

Guru ji said that there are four methods of meditation. The object of all the methods is to achieve single-minded concentration. One has to adopt a method depending upon his nature.

- a) 'Vaikhri'. These are the spoken words of Gurbani. In this process, the tongue and mind are used.
- b) 'Madhyama'. In this method, meditation on Gurbani is synchronized with the breathing, like saying 'Wahe' while inhaling and 'Guru' while exhaling. Here, the subtle forces are working with gross organs.
- c) 'Pasyanti'. In this method, the mind concentrates simultaneously on the heart chakra and recitation of Gurbani.
- d) 'Para'. In this and all the preceding methods, subtle forces are applied to the maximum. The mind concentrates on the navel and recitation of Gurbani.

Guru Nanak Dev advised Baba Budha to recite Gurbani in 'Para' mode and to serve the saints. He further told Bhai Budha that the Lord's name is of great benefit. Just like clarified butter(ghee) adds taste to all kinds of food preparations, Meditation on the Lord's name with one pointed dedication benefits all elements of life. This also improves health and life expectancy.

Humility and Service along with Meditation is the Secret

2.12 Bhai Firna Khahira and Bhai Jodh

Bhai Firna Khahira and Bhai Jodh came to Guru Nanak Dev ji and prayed for his blessings and advice so that they

may become His disciples and attain liberation.

Guru ji told them that to become a good disciple, one must be humble in his words and actions and should also serve other disciples and needy in the best possible way. One should get up early in the morning, bathe and then meditate on the Lords name. Simultaneously, one must practice humility (as spiritual practices often lead to pride). One must treat the Lord as the Master and himself as the servant. One must also attend the assembly of saints (*'sadhu sangat'*) and listen to the Guru's word with love and devotion. When two disciples meet, they should discuss only the Gurbani and the Lord.

The two devotees followed this advice and were thus liberated.

Chapter 3

Disciples of Sri Guru Angad Dev

Accept the Will of the Lord as Sweet

3.1 *Bhai Jiwa*

Bhai Jiwa used to serve Guru Angad Dev and would bring 'khichri' (a dish of salted rice mixed with lentils and vegetables) for the Guruji's free kitchen for breakfast. Once it rained very heavily and there seemed no prospect of the rain stopping till the next morning. Bhai Jiwa requested Guruji to stall the rain so that he may bring the food in time for next morning. Guruji told him that rain and wind were very important for the crops and the ships. Many insects living under the ground depended upon the rains for food. If the rain and the wind stopped untimely, lot of harm would be caused, whereas, the breakfast delayed by a few hours will not make much difference.

To accept the Will of the Lord is the fundamental principle Of Guru Nanak's teachings (in the first stanza of Japji Sahib, Guru Nanak Devji has advised all to accept the Will of the Lord which He has written for us).

Guruji further said that the saints should accept the Will of the Lord like a faithful wife who accepts the will of her husband. Bhai Jiwa should therefore remain happy in the Will of the Lord and He will then accept his services.

Bhai Jiwa faithfully followed these words of wisdom and attained salvation.

Shiva adopted Vishnu as their guru. Vishnu was the incarnation of 'Satwa' (one of the qualities of *maya*) i.e. virtuosity which is white. Shiva was the incarnation of inertia (*Tamas*), which is black. So when Vishnu meditated on Shiva, he became dark in complexion. When Shiva meditated on Vishnu, he became white. Vishnu was already the form of Divine Knowledge. He adopted Shiva as Guru only as a worldly custom as he had incarnated as a human being. Similarly, Guru Nanak Dev ji was also the form of the Divine Knowledge but adopted Guru Angad Dev as his Guru as a tradition of the bodily form. So, they should have full faith in Guru Nanak Dev and they would be liberated.

These persons were thus liberated accordingly.

The Lord's Name is the Bridge for Liberation

6.13 *Bhai Dalla, Bhagirath, Japu and Niwala*

These four persons came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and prayed to be enlightened on the fact whether Guru Nanak Dev was a worshipper of the Lord in the manifest form. Guru Arjun Dev said that differentiation between the manifest and unmanifest aspects of the Lord could be made if there are two Supreme Beings. Since He is only One, this question does not arise.

Guru Arjun Dev then quoted a shloka from guru Granth Sahib which is explained as

"He (the Lord) is Manifest, Unmanifest as well as Nothingness (*Shunya* as described by Buddhists).

He created Himself (*Saibhang*) and He worships Himself."
(Sukhmani, Ashtpadi 21)

When He desires, He manifests in any form, destroys the tyrants and reverts back to His Unmanifest form. Take the example of a king. The same king, when he desires, wears his weapons and formal dress and sits in his court. When he desires, he retires to his palace, removes his formal

dress and weapons and rests on his bed.

When anybody calls for the king, and asks for his help, the king helps at both times, when he is in his court and when he is resting in his palace because the king's servants are always ready to carry out his orders.

Similarly, **Guru Nanak Dev was a worshipper of the Lord's Name.** With the grace of His Name, His manifest form helps in the physical worldly affairs and His unmanifest form blesses one with Divine Knowledge. Therefore, the worship of His Name is superior to the worship of either the manifest or the unmanifest form.

As an illustration, when Lord Rama was to cross the ocean for going to Sri Lanka, he having all the spiritual powers could have dried up the ocean. But he wanted to teach the people the greatness of His Name. As not many would get rid of their ignorance by meeting him personally, but everyone could worship His Name. He therefore wrote 'Ram' on the stones, built the bridge with them and crossed over. This proves that worship of the Lord's Name is superior to His worship in the manifest or unmanifest form. **He in His 'Existence-Consciousness-Bliss' form happens to be everywhere, inside and outside of our bodies.** But without recitation of His Name, the mind and intellect are not purified and thus such beings keep on re-incarnating. Those who have meditated on His Name, purify their mind and intellect and the Divine Knowledge dawns upon them. Therefore, their cycle of birth and death is terminated. His Name is thus more distinguished than his manifest and unmanifest form.

The devotees then asked Guru ji that Lord Rama had built a bridge but Hanuman jumped over the ocean. How could he do that? Guru ji replied that Hanuman was a worshipper of His Name and His Name being supreme had given him the power to jump over the ocean. In spiritual science, there is another interpretation of this incident. Worship of the Lord's Name gives one the knowledge and the power to jump over the ignorance of the manifest world.

But only a few can possess this power. Whereas, even the feeble and the weak can walk over the bridge. There are very few who possess dispassion to the world, pain and pleasure and follow the path of knowledge. But those who worship His Name are numerous. By worship of His Name, many sinners and the virtuous have attained liberation.

Guru ji advised these persons to meditate on the Lord's Name and seek the company of devotees (*sadhu sangat*). From that day onwards, these devotees always sought refuge with Guru ji and devoted their time to his service, meditation and listening to *kirtan* and spiritual discourses. They were thus liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

Fruit of Karma

6.14 Bhai Moola, Sooja, Chandu Etc.

Bhai Moola, Sooja Dhawan, Bhai Chandu Chauchar, Bhai Ramdass Bhandari, Bhai Bala and Saindass came to Guru Arjun Dev ji, prostrated before him and prayed for clarification about the fruit of *karma*. They said that the account of all the actions of the human beings were evaluated by Dharam Raj, and every virtuous and evil act had its own fruit. They wanted to know whether the account of the sins is subtracted from the account of virtues and fruit of only the resultant actions is to be enjoyed by the individual or the fruits of both the evil and virtuous actions have to be enjoyed separately. They wanted this to be explained in detail.

Guru ji said that there were four types of disciples i.e.

- (1) Those who perform virtuous acts with specific desire to be fulfilled in return for the virtuous act.
- (2) Those who perform virtuous acts without any desire
- (3) Those who are the true worshippers or '*bhakats*'
- (4) Those who are blessed with the Divine Knowledge or the '*gyanis*'.

Guru ji enquired about the category of the disciples

they wanted their question to be answered.

The disciples prayed that Guru ji might kindly explain about all the four categories of disciples in detail.

Guru ji said that a king has four types of subjects and there are different types of rules for revenue collection from each type. Similarly, rules for evaluation of *karma* are also different for different types of people.

- 1) The lowest classes of subjects are the share croppers. They cultivate the land and share the produce with the king. As soon as the crop is ready, king's officials arrive and collect their share. They punish the croppers for any dishonest deal. These people are always in fear of the officials.
- 2) There are some subjects who are given land on lease. They pay the amount fixed in the deed at regular intervals and a collector comes to take the money without any hassles.
- 3) There are some subjects, particularly on the kingdom's borders, who offer only gifts like horses, hawks etc to the king. They also join the king in his battles. They do not pay any taxes but collect revenue from their tenants.
- 4) The fourth category of subjects is the freeholders. They collect revenues from their tenants and maintain armies on behalf of the king. For maintenance of their private armies, the king pays them. In their own territories they exercise full control.

In the same way, humans created by the Lord can also be divided into four categories.

- 1) Those human beings, who act with an intention or desire to be fulfilled are always dealing with untruths, sins etc. Whatever spiritual activities they do, like visiting holy places or fasting etc. are for gaining a specific objective like wanting of a son, success in business or love etc. They are always under the fear of punishment by Dharam Raj for their sins. They

have to enjoy the fruit of their sins and virtues separately.

- 2) Those humans who have mastered their desires are always doing virtuous acts. However, sometimes they may commit a sin unintentionally. In their case, their account of virtues and sins is combined. If their virtues exceed the sins, they enjoy the fruit of the balance virtues after subtracting the sins. In case their sins exceed their virtues, they enjoy the fruit of the sins after subtracting the virtues. Normally, their virtues always exceed their sins.
- 3) Those who are the true worshippers of the Supreme Being always perform virtuous acts with full faith in the Lord. Any sin they commit is just incidental, but the virtues are always performed with full intention. Whatever minor sins are there, are exempted and they are always close to the Lord. If they incarnate again in the world, they indulge in devotion and are thus liberated from the cycle of birth and death. If they have not overcome their desires, they first enjoy heaven. After their tenure in the heaven is over, they take birth in a rich man's house and attain their liberation. If they have overcome their desires, they incarnate directly in the house of a saint, undertake devotional activities and are liberated. This is the fruit of true worship. It is similar to the case of the king's subjects who offer gifts of horses and hawks to the king and enjoy all benefits. The true worshippers are always happy doing devotion and meditation.
- 4) The fourth category is the '*gyanis*' or those who are blessed with Divine Wisdom. They consider their bodies as an illusion or all actions or *karma* as perishable. They are beyond *karmas*. The *karmas* cannot affect them like darkness cannot exist near the sun. They are always '*jiwan muktas*' or liberated while in the body.

The disciples then enquired as to what happens to their

karma if they are not to enjoy the fruit? How the 'gyanis' in this world act while in this body?

Guru ji replied that those who serve them enjoy the fruit of their virtues and those who cause them suffering or criticize them enjoy the fruit of their sins and go to hell similar to the case of the close associates of the king, who enjoy their free hold states. The 'gyanis' live in the world as '*jiwan muktas*' or as liberated souls while still in the human body. They are not affected by their *karma*.

Service of the Saints also Results in Liberation

6.15 Bhai Bishnu Bihra and Sunder

Bhai Bishnu Bihra and Sunder came to Guru ji, prostrated and prayed for their liberation. Guru ji told Sunder to bring firewood for the kitchen and fetch water (in those days water was carried in buffalo skins wrapped around the shoulders of the carrier). Bhai Bishnu was asked to heat water early in the morning, bathe the devotees and wash their feet.

The devotees did these services with full faith and devotion and were thus liberated.

Seek the Remedy for Your Liberation with the Saints

6.16 Bhai Jattu, Bhanu Etc.

Bhai Jattu, Bhanu, Tirtha and Nihala, all Chadda Khattris came to Guru Arjun Dev ji, prostrated and prayed that in Gurbani, it is said that

"Mare rakhe eko aap. Manukh kai kichhu nahin haath"

i.e. it is the Lord who punishes or exonerates a being. The humans have no say in the matter.

But it is also said

"Jaisa bije so lune karam eh khait. Akirt ghana Hari visriya joni bharmet"

i.e. you reap as you sow, it is your *karma* that your

body enjoys. The ungrateful people have forgotten Hari (God), so they incarnate again and again.

The two statements being contradictory, they were not clear as to which one to follow.

Guru ji said that in the holy Guru Granth Sahib there are instructions for all kinds of people. All the persons get different types of treatment from the Lord depending upon their state of evolution i.e.

- 1) For the persons who are entitled for the fruit of the karmas, the instruction is
"Jaisa bije so lune karam eh khet" i.e. you reap as you sow.
- 2) Those who are treated differently for the Lord's worship, the instruction is *"Mare rakhe Eko Aap"* i.e. He Himself may punish or exonerate.
- 3) Those who are entitled for the Divine Knowledge or *"Gyan"*, for them the instruction is *"Tu ghat ghat antar sarab niranter, Hari Eko Purakh samana"* i.e. the Lord is prevailing everywhere continuously and always Hari, The Lord is only One, as *Atma* of all beings is present in all beings

Guru ji further explained that a doctor has medicines for the patients of all types of diseases. He has separate medicines for fever due to heat, cold, cough etc. The doctor examines the pulse of the patient, diagnoses the malady and only then prescribes the medicine. If the doctor is not experienced, he can administer the wrong medicine, which will not cure the disease.

Similarly, the saints diagnose the spiritual disease of the people by their dialogues, actions and senses. From the senses, they find out the condition of the mind. Just as the disease is diagnosed by the feel of the pulse of the patient, a person is diagnosed by his actions. The saints dispel the ignorance of the devotees according to their state of evolution. They give the instructions depending upon the entitlement of the devotee.

Guru ji told the four devotees that they were entitled to

devotion. Thus, they should engage themselves in meditation and serve the disciples. They were thus liberated after performing the service and devotion.

Criteria for Adopting the Mode for Personal Evolution

6.17 *Bhai Nau, Bhulu Etc.*

Bhai Nau, Bhulu, Jattu and Moola came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated before him and prayed for clarification on some aspects of '*Gurbani*'. They said that *Gurbani* contains instructions for '*Seva Yoga*', i.e. service mode of evolution; '*Bhakti Yoga*' i.e. devotion and meditation mode; and '*Gyan Yoga*' i.e. path of knowledge. They were not clear as to for which mode or path they were eligible. They therefore requested Guru ji to enlighten them on this aspect.

Guru ji replied that the eligibility for the three types of paths or modes for personal evolution could be found out by the following criteria.

- 1) If you listen to spiritual discourses and are able to discriminate between sins and virtues, and you desire to perform virtuous acts and stop committing sins, but due to the effects of past bad *karmas*, you do not succeed, then you should follow '*Seva Yoga*' i.e. serve the disciples, listen to '*Gurbani*' with full attention, let it soak in your mind and expel evil tendencies.
- 2) If by listening to *Gurbani*, your evil tendencies are expelled or hardly a few are left, you are then eligible for '*Bhakti Yoga*'. You should then recite and meditate on *Gurbani* all the 24 hours and expel the remaining evil tendencies.
- 3) When you understand that by dint of meditation on '*Gurbani*', you do not differentiate between good and bad or sin and virtue, all good and bad tendencies are stopped and you have achieved dispassion from the worldly affairs, you are eligible for '*Gyan Yoga*'.

You are then able to realize the Divine knowledge and see and experience His presence in everyone and everywhere.

Therefore Guru ji told them to adopt the mode of evolution or type of *yoga* as per their eligibility for their liberation. There are instructions in *Gurbani* for all types of disciples. When you go to a saint, he will instruct you according to your eligibility and position in life. Otherwise, you can find out your eligibility as per the above criteria. The three Yogas are not contradicting. Thus they may be performed simultaneously.

They understood and followed the instructions and were thus liberated.

When the Lord Wills, His Grace Falls on the Sleeping Ones Too

6.18 *Bhai Chattar Dass and Moola Etc.*

Bhai Chattar Dass, Moola, Haru and Garu came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and prayed for certain clarification. They said that all the saints and holy persons advise to get up early in the morning, meditate and make positive effort to do good deeds. But in *Gurbani* it is said "*Dati Sahib sandiyan, kiya challe Tis nal. Ik jagande na lahan, ik sutiyan dei uthal*" i.e. all the blessings are with the Lord and nobody can take them by force. If He desires, He may not give them to those who are awake and still wake up the sleeping ones and bless them with His Grace.

They said that as per their understanding, if the Lord's Grace is available to the sleeping ones too, why should one make any effort? Guru ji told them that this has two interpretations.

- 1) Those who are awake, get the boons which are given to the sleeping ones also after waking them up. When '*prasad*' or grace is distributed in the gathering of devotees, it is given to those who are awake and

also to them who are sleeping after waking them up.

- 2) Secondly, it is said that the grace is not given to the waking ones, yet the sleeping ones are woken up and offered the Grace. This also has two interpretations. It can be understood by this example.

- a) Once there were two merchants. They came to know that a ship would depart the next day. So they travelled a long distance and reached the port. One of them boarded the ship and the other one waited on the shore. He thought that when the ship will depart there would be a drum beat. He can then board the ship. But he failed to hear the drum beat and the ship left without him. The passengers on the ship were tired after having travelled a long distance and soon fell asleep. But the merchants on board woke them up purchased their wares and they made good profits. Those who failed to board the ship, though they were awake, lost the opportunity to do business. On the way back home they were looted by robbers.

Similarly, those who come to the gathering of devotees will receive the Lord's Grace even if they fall asleep. They would also be made to listen to the Guru's words. Those who are in their houses, though awake, will not receive the Grace or be able to listen to the *Gurbani*.

- b) The second interpretation is that the Lord's Grace is received by the humble minds. There are some people who read some spiritual text or delve in yogic practices, become proud of their attainments and think that they are awake and alert and are acting fearlessly on their own strength. They never receive the Lord's Grace. But those who are ignorant and have a keen desire to expel their ignorance go to the assembly of devotees regularly.

The saints and the Guru dispel their sleep or ignorance. They evolve just like a businessman who makes little profits daily but in the end becomes rich. Similarly, a person who is humble and is regular in attending the assembly of devotees ('*sadhu sangat*') is blessed with Divine Knowledge.

Thus, these disciples became humble and attended the assembly of devotees regularly and were liberated.

Significance of the Word 'Waheguru'

6.19 Bhai Phirna, Jetha and Changa

Bhai Phirna Behl, Bhai Jetha and Changa came to Guru Arjun Dev and prayed that some people meditate on the Name 'Rama'; some meditate on 'Krishna'; some on 'Om' and yet some on 'Sohum'. They have been instructed to meditate on 'Waheguru'. They wanted to know the Name on which they should meditate.

Guru ji said that all the boats on the riverbank are capable of taking you across the river. But you should be concerned with the boat that you have boarded. Similarly, all the Names of the Lord are capable of leading one to liberation. But the disciples of a Guru will be liberated only by the Name given by their Guru.

For the disciples of Guru Nanak Dev, he has meditated nine '*yugas*' or ages on 'Wasdev' and from this Name he has taken the letter 'Wawa' of Gurmukhi script. Then he meditated on 'Hari' for nine ages and took the letter 'Haha' from it; thereafter he meditated on 'Govind' for nine ages and from 'Govind' he has taken 'Gagga' letter and then he meditated on the Name 'Rama' and took the 'Rara' letter. These four letters make the word 'Waheguru'. Thus, there is the fruit of thirty-six ages of meditation on the word 'Waheguru'.

Thus, those who will meditate on the Name 'Waheguru'

will terminate their cycle of life and death.

The disciples and their descendants were liberated by meditating on 'Waheguru'.

The Manifest and the Unmanifest form of the Incarnations

6.20 *Bhai Vesa and Gopi Etc.*

Bhai Vesa, Gopi and Bhai Tulsia Bhardwaj Brahmin and Bhai Bhaira came to Guru Arjun Dev and prostrated before him. They prayed for clarification of two seemingly contradicting verses of Saint Namdev.

1. *"Pande, tumra Ram Chand, so bhi awat dekhia tha. Ravan seti sarbar hoi, ghar ki joi gawai thi "* i.e. O Pandit! I saw your Ram Chandra's advent into this world. He had a fight with Ravana and lost his wife.
2. Again Namdev has said: *"Jasrath Rai nand Raja mera Ram Chand parnawe Nama tut rus Amrit piye"* i.e. O Raja Ram Chand, son of king Dashrath, I worship you and drink the immortality giving nectar of your name.

From the first verse it is seen that the incarnations are belittled and in the second verse, the incarnations are praised. They were not clear as to how to understand this seeming contradiction?

Guru ji said that one type of worship is of the 'manifest form' i.e. '*sargun*' and the other type is the worship of 'unmanifest form' i.e. '*nirgun*'. To understand this, take the case of the ocean. There are innumerable waves on its surface. Then there are rivers. But the ocean, the waves and the rivers are only one thing i.e. water. Similarly, the Supreme Being also manifests in many forms. He is giving power to everybody in the form of existence-knowledge-bliss through the incarnations and saints. But the Pundits or the priests who are devoid of real Spiritual Knowledge worship the incarnations in the manifest form and harbour malice against the saints. The first verse of Namdev is addressed to these

Pundits.

Suffering and enjoyment is connected to the form of human body. But those who are blessed with Divine Knowledge know that the body is temporary and false. So, they also treat pain and pleasure as false.

Therefore, there are worshippers of the Supreme Being or the Original Source of all creations and there are worshippers of Its manifestations. The first type know that everything and everybody is the manifestation of the Lord. So they do not harbour enmity or malice towards anybody. On the contrary, the worshippers of the manifest forms are the opposite. The believers in Lord Rama show malice towards Lord Krishna and the believers in Lord Krishna harbour malice towards Lord Rama.

Guru ji advised them to worship the Unmanifest Lord fearlessly and without harbouring hatred towards anybody. They were thus liberated.

Adopt Virtuous State for Peace of Mind

6.21 *Bhai Charu, Bami Etc.*

Bhai Charu, Bami etc. accompanied by many others, all residents of Sultanpur Lodhi came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and said that they were all devotees of Guru Amar Dass. They were instructed by him to earn an honest living, serve the disciples, be humble, sing '*Gurbani*' in the morning hours after taking a bath and after sunrise recite from the sacred books of the Gurus and then start the worldly business. Although they were following these instructions faithfully, they were not at peace with themselves. They humbly requested for some suitable advice to help them in their endeavour.

Guru ji advised them to abandon '*tamsik*' and '*rajsik*' qualities and adopt '*satwik*' or virtuous quality for peace of mind. The devotees then asked, how could they recognize different '*gunas*' or qualities of the mind?

Guru ji explained that those who indulge in violence

and anger were '*tamsik*'. Those who were greedy and proud were '*rajsik*'. Those who talked politely and were humble were the '*satwik*'.

They then inquired as to what type of diets encourage these qualities in a person? Guru ji said that '*tamsik*' qualities were generated by stale food, excessive walking or physical work, excess sleep and by wearing dirty clothes. Eating a lot of sweets and salted food, more sexual enjoyment and liking self-praise generated the '*rajsik*' qualities. The '*satwik*' qualities were generated by eating simple food like rice, lentils, *khichri* (rice and lentils cooked together), meagre diet, wearing of clean clothes etc.

The test for the qualities of minds were as under:

- 1) When one listens to Guru's words with one pointed attention and is able to understand without any wavering of the mind then one is of '*satwik*' bent of mind.
- 2) If the mind wavers and stabilizes alternately, then it is '*rajsik*' bent of mind.
- 3) If the mind was all the time wavering and not able to understand anything of the spiritual discourses, it was of '*tamsik*' bent of mind.

Concentrated attentive mind is a sign of '*satwik*' quality. One attains knowledge only in '*satwik*' state of mind. There are two types of warriors. One who conquers the enemy outside and the other who wins over the enemy within. The balladeers sing the praise of the warriors who conquer the outside enemy. But the praise of those, who have won over their internal enemy i.e. their own minds, is sung by the saints. (There are a number of ballads {*vaars*} in Sri Guru Granth Sahib)

A '*sadhu*' or a saint is one who has won over his senses. A devotee or '*bhakta*' is one whose no breath goes waste without remembering the Lord's Name. Guru ji thus advised the devotees to always remain in the '*satwik*' *guna* or state of mind. They will then be able to attain their peace of

mind. Early morning is the time when the illusive powers of 'Maya' or the Lord's creative and sustaining power throws its net over the human beings. This is the time when the devotees of "Waheguru" or the Supreme Being are awake and alert in meditation. They are thus saved from being entrapped in *Maya's* net.

Guru ji also said that if a person comes to a devotee for food or clothes, he should be helped. If his needs are beyond one's means, more devotees should join together and meet his requirements. The devotees should help others very humbly like the rain that falls equally on all.

Guru ji further advised the devotees to visit him on the festivals like *Diwali* and *Baisakhi* and bathe in the holy tank at Amritsar. On other days, they should visit the *Dharamshala* two or three times. Guru ji said that Sultanpur Lodhi is a treasure house of devotion to God. The people of this place are very much devoted to the Lord.

One Lamp Lights More Lamps and the Darkness is Dispelled

6.22 *Bhai Deepa Kasra*

Bhai Deepa Kasra was residing in Guru Arjun's Dev's house and used to serve him. He would also prepare delicious food and offer it to the visiting devotees. He himself would eat only their leftovers. He would also wash their feet with warm water, massage their legs and offer clothes to the needy. He also discussed Guru's words with the disciples.

Guru ji was very pleased with his services and said that like one lighted lamp lights more lamps which dispel darkness, he has blessed Bhai Deepa (which literally means a lamp in Punjabi) with the light of Divine Knowledge. Whoever will meet Bhai Deepa shall also attain the Divine Knowledge.

Effort for a Holy Cause Brings High Dividends

6.23 *Bhai Lala and Langah Chaudhary*

Bhai Lala and Langah Dhillon, both village chiefs from Patti, came to Guru Arjun Dev. At that time the holy tank of Amritsar was under construction. These two disciples performed the service with great devotion. They would bring monetary contributions and also carry out physical labour.

Guru ji was highly pleased with them. He said that those disciples, who would dig out one unit of earth would liberate their descendants. Those who would dig out a full cartload, everyone with them would also be liberated. Those who would endeavor to make steps of the tank, his seat in the Guru's house shall be permanent i.e. his descendants shall be permanently devoted to Guru ji.

The tank of Amritsar is the Mansarovar (a holy lake in Tibet) and the Harimandir in it's midst is the ship to take the devotees across the world to liberation. Whosoever takes bath in the holy tank will be cleansed of his sins. Those who shall listen to the holy word of *Gurbani* in the Harimandir Sahib, take it to heart and act on it, their tendency to commit sins shall be expelled. They will be blessed with Divine Knowledge and live in the world as '*Jiwan Muktas* or liberated souls while still in the body.

Bhai Lalla and Langah Dhillon and other '*Masands* (Guru's authorized representatives for collecting donations) and whosoever made an endeavor for construction of the tank and the *Gurudwara* were liberated.

Guru ji said " *Uddam karat mun nirmal hoa. Hari marag chalat bharam sagla khoia. Nam nidhan Satguru sunio mit gae sagle roga jiu*".

This means, those who will make an endeavor to come to Amritsar and participate in the construction of the holy tank and the Harimandir will purify their minds and intellect. Those who will make an endeavor to follow the Guru's precepts will dispel all their doubts. The Name of '*Waheguru*' is the treasure house of wealth. All other kinds of wealth

remain behind in this world (after death) but the Lord's Name goes with one even after the death. One gets the God's Name from '*Satguru*' (the true master). This God's Name dispels the darkness of ignorance, all diseases and sorrows.

If the Lord Wills, He can Sustain One without Breath

6.24 *Bhai Ajah, Ajaib and Umar Shah*

Bhai Ajah, Ajaib and Umar Shah were '*Masands*' of Guru ji. They served in the *Gurudwara* and took an active role in the construction of Amritsar. They collected the donations to Guru ji and lived on the offerings from the disciples. They were honest men. One day Guru ji asked them as to how they treated Guru's money? They replied that they treated it as a poison. Thus, they would not use it for themselves. Guru ji said that this honesty would be the cause of their liberation.

Then they prayed that it is said in the *Gurbani* "*Prabhu bhavē bin sās tē rakhe. Prabhu bhavē tā Hari gun bhakhe*" i.e. if the Lord desires, He may keep one without breath. If the Lord desires, He may cause one to say His praise. But as per their knowledge, no one has ever lived without breath. Once Bhisham Pitama (of Mahabharata), son of Santal, got a boon from his father that he could die at his will. When the time for his death came, the Sun was in the south of equator. He waited for his death till the Sun came to the north. But he still maintained his breathing. They requested to be elucidated as to how one can live without breath.

Guru ji said that this power to keep one alive without breathing lies with the Supreme Being. The trees and the mountains are alive without breathing. A child in the mother's womb has no breath for the first six months but it is still growing. It is only after six months that the child in the womb starts breathing. Thus, the Supreme Being is omnipotent.

The second interpretation is that only those breaths are

fruitful which are spent in the praise of the Lord. Otherwise, these are like the skin bellows of the blacksmith. So, do not waste your breaths, but remember the Lord.

Amritsar is the Highest Place for Pilgrimage

6.25 *Bhai Paira Chajjal and Kandhu Sanghar*

Bhai Paira Chajjal and Kandhu Sanghar came to Guru Arjun Dev and prostrated before him. They prayed to Guru ji for advice so that they may be liberated.

Guru ji told them to have bath in Amritsar, meditate on *Gurbani* and serve the disciples. He further explained that Amritsar is the original pilgrimage center but over a period of time it had become obscure. Once the Third Master, Guru Amar Dass was pleased and told the Fourth Master, Guru Ram Dass " The people of *kaliyug* (dark age) will have very short lives and blunt intellects. They will also be short on resources. They will not be able to take a holy dip at the pilgrimage centers. Let us create a pilgrimage centre in Punjab, where a holy dip will be equal to a pilgrimage to all the holy places in the world".

Guru Amar Dass ordered construction at a site nearby which was in ruins. Guru Ram Dass constructed a tank at that place and said that his successor, the Fifth Master will complete it by paving it with stone. Guru ji named this pilgrimage center as Amritsar (the tank of holy nectar) and said that this will be a major place for pilgrimage. All other pilgrim centers like Kashi (Varanasi) etc shall be subservient to it. When *kaliyug* will destroy all other pilgrim places, all temples, places of worship and pilgrimage will come here in Amritsar. This will be the Lord of Universe (*Jagan Nath*).

When Ganges river becomes invisible, there will be hermitage of *rishis* (hermits) around Amritsar upto a radius of 25-30 kilometers.

Guru ji constructed another tank near Amritsar known as *Santokhsar* and said that whosoever takes bath in this tank will dispel his sins and shall attain *santokh* (contentment).

Human Being is not the Body

6.26 *Bhai Kapur Dev*

Bhai Kapur Dev was a very dedicated disciple of Guru ji. He, his wife, sons and daughters-in-law, all used to welcome the Guru's disciples and serve them whole-heartedly. One day he expressed his desire to Guru Arjun Dev to meet a disciple who was very dear to Guru ji. Guru ji said that one such man, Bhai Samman, lived in Sahbazpur and he could go and meet him.

Bhai Kapur Dev went to Sahbazpur and met Bhai Samman. Bhai Samman treated him with great pleasure and hospitality. He bought a lot of firewood and spent a lot of time in repairing the floor mats. Bhai Kapur Dev inquired of him as to why he was spending so much time on repairing torn floor mats when Guru ji had sent him to have discussions with him. Bhai Samman replied that repairing of mats and arranging firewood was also an important work which had to be done first. He would talk to Bhai Kapur later.

The whole night, **Bhai Samman** and his son performed *kirtan*. Next day dacoits came and drove away all the cattle of the village. The villagers followed the dacoits, there was exchange of fire and one bullet hit Bhai Samman's son and he died. Bhai Samman cremated him with the wood he had purchased the previous day. After the cremation, the village folks were returning home singing devotional songs i.e. *kirtan* when they met Bhai Kapur Dev. A large number of Guru's disciples came to give condolence. Bhai Samman spread the floor mats which he had repaired. Bhai Kapur Dev now understood that Bhai Samman had prior knowledge of his son's death. He asked Bhai Samman that since he knew about his son's death, why did he not get him pardoned from Guru ji and prayed for his long life?

Bhai Samman replied that since the human body was false or perishable, there was no surprise that it had died. Those who expressed sorrow on death of the body were

fools. If one had to ask for something from Guru ji, one should request for the Lord's Name, which would be helpful even after death. No body was a father or a son. It is a game for a few days. The Lord had created the body by combining five contradictory elements i.e. earth, water, fire, air and ether. After death they separate again. Nobody is born and nobody dies. Human beings suffer because they have forgotten their true form i.e. '*Atma*'. If one fully understood, accepted and acted on Guru's words i.e. '*Gurbani*', he would be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

Guru ji has said "*Nah kichu janme, nah kichu mare. Aapan chalit Aap hi kare*" i.e. no one is born and no one dies. It is all the Lord's play. Just like when there are clouds the blue sky cannot be seen. But it is always there. It is neither created nor destroyed. Similarly, the human beings are always there in the form of "*Atma*". Their birth and death is simply an illusion.

Mere Glimpse of Amritsar Destroys All Sins

6.27 *Bhai Jodha and Jallo Etc.*

Bhai Jodha and Jallo, two *masands*, were living in Tulaspur. Bhai Mohan and Bhai Alam Chand, also two *masands* were living in Ganj area of Lahore. They used to bring donations to Guru ji at Amritsar. They were meticulous in ensuring that these donations were not tempered with. They would say that any dishonest use of Guru's money was like a fly in the food. It spoils the whole food and makes one vomit. Similarly, any dishonesty with Guru's funds would destroy all wealth and also affect one's physical health.

One day these four *masands* were coming to Amritsar with the offerings, riding on a chariot. On the way a big black cobra blocked their way. The snake would turn its hood in whichever way they turned. Bhai Mohan then got down from the chariot, took a copper pot and requested the snake to climb into the pot if it wanted to visit Guru ji.

The snake quietly crept into it. Bhai Mohan covered the pot with a bronze vessel and kept it in the chariot.

When they reached Amritsar they prostrated before Guru ji. Guru ji asked them, how many they were? They replied that there were four of them. Guru ji told the attendant to give them *prasad* for five persons because the fifth i.e. the snake which had come with them was also a *masand*.

The disciples wanted to know why he had become a snake? Guru ji told them that in his previous life he was very proud and did not bow to other disciples. Thus now its hood was raised. He had also dishonestly misappropriated **Guru's money**. As a result, he had become a poisonous snake.

Guru ji ordered the copper pot to be brought in his presence. It was brought and kept in the congregation. The snake crept out and stood vertically and raised his hood. Guru ji asked an attendant to bring holy water from the Amritsar tank and sprinkle it on the snake. As soon as the nectar was sprinkled, the snake discarded its body, took the form of a god (*devta*) and rose to the sky.

Then, Guru ji said that the mere glimpse of Amritsar destroys all the sins of the devotees.

One is a Brahmin by Deeds not by Birth

6.28 Bhai Dhesi and Jodh

Bhai Dhesi and Jodh were Sanghar Brahmins. They came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated before him and said that although they were Brahmins, the other Brahmins did not allow them to sit with them in formal functions because they had adopted a *Kshatriya* as a Guru (Sikh Gurus were *Kshatriyas*). They had stopped worshipping Ganges and Kashi, which are the places of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. Instead they were visiting Amritsar. They had deserted Sanskrit, which was the language of the *Vedas* and were reading and singing *Gurbani* in local Punjabi language. They were not observing fasts on *Shivratri*, *Janamashatami* and

Ekadashi (11th day of moon) and were eating the food offered by the disciples of Guru ji. They had left the customary ritual ceremonies for birth and death as followed by the other Brahmins. Instead they were performing prayer (*ardas*) and took '*karah prasad*' (pudding made of wheat flour, sugar and clarified butter). Therefore, they had come to seek shelter with Guru ji who had destroyed their pride in being Brahmins. They were blessed with the sweet blessings of '*Gurbani*'. They therefore prayed to be enlightened as to what answer they should give to other Brahmins.

Guru ji said that Amritsar is the residence of the Supreme Being in Unmanifest form. Brahma's, Vishnu's and Shiva's pilgrimage centers obtain their purity from here. Therefore, they are all present here. Amritsar is the pilgrimage center of water (tank) and holy saints also reside here.

"Ganga Jamuna Godavari Sarusti te karhe uddam dhoor sadhu ki tai. Kilwikh mail bhare pare hamre wich, hamri mail sadhu ki dhoor gawai".

i.e. when the sinners take bath in Ganges, Jamuna, Ggodavari and Saraswati rivers which are considered holy, they leave their sins there. But those who came to Amritsar for pilgrimage, their sins were dispelled with the dust of saints' feet.

Secondly, when they hear the holy words of Gurus (*Gurbani*), they become purified.

The disciples then said that dirt is removed by washing with water. How can it be removed by the dust of the saints' feet?

Guru ji explained that dirty clothes are washed away with an alkaline mineral (unpurified carbonate of sodium known as '*sajji*' in Punjab and used by washer men). This *sajji* was also a kind of dirt but it cleans the clothes. Similarly, the dirt of the saints' feet can wash away the sins of the sinners. The sound of Guru's words (*Gurbani*) was also a type of subtle dust which generated love and devotion. All other pilgrimage centers were located at water bodies whereas at Amritsar, there was a water tank as well as the source

of the holy Name of the Supreme Being (in Harimander Sahib *kirtan* is continuous from early morning till late night). Thus, Amritsar was a pilgrimage center of water as well as the holy Name.

The disciples asked on what basis Harimander Sahib has been built? Guru ji said "Harimandir Sahib is a ship. Whosoever comes with faith and listens to His Name is taken across the ocean of the world. Harimandir Sahib is the ship and the Lord's Name is the navigator".

"Tirath nawan jau, tirath Naam hai.

Tirath Sabad vichar anter Gyan hai."

i.e. why go on a pilgrimage for a holy dip? The Lord's Name is the real pilgrimage. Meditation on *Gurbani* is the Divine Knowledge, and therefore is the real pilgrimage.

Whatever enters the pilgrimage centers on Ganges, Godavari etc goes to the ocean which is the destination of all rivers therefore these rivers can lead the bathers only to their destination, the ocean. On the other hand, when you meditate on the *Gurbani*, it takes you directly to the feet of the Unmanifest Lord Narayan. Hence, Amritsar was blessed with both the holy water and the Lord's Name.

As regards fasting, the Guru's disciples always eat frugally, and hence were always on fast. The others fasted only once on *Ekadashi* day (eleventh day of the moon). Bhagat Namdev has said "*Ram sang Namdev jan kau Pritagya aai. Ekedashi barat rahe kahe kau tirath jai*" i.e. Namdev has pledged in the Name of Lord Rama that he would neither fast on *Ekadashi* nor go on a pilgrimage because those saints who had full faith in the Lord's Name were blessed with fruit of all fasts and visits to the pilgrimage centers.

It was because of ignorance that the Brahmins were proud of themselves. But Guru's disciples were blessed with knowledge of '*Atma*' or Divine Knowledge. They did not consider themselves as a body. Those who were proud of being born in high caste were the ones who were really the lowborn or the '*chandalas*'. The real Brahmin was a person who knew that the Lord is prevailing everywhere and in

everyone. Such persons did not have any enmity with anybody (when everyone is the form of the Lord, how can one have enmity with Him in any form?). The physical body of the Brahmin and the '*chandala*' is made up of the same type of bones, skin, flesh etc.

Saint Kabir has said:

*"Kahu Kabir jo Brahm Bichare.
So Brahman kahiat hai hamare."*

i.e. the real Brahmin is the one who meditates on the Supreme Being and has attained Him.

Guru ji thus told the disciples to discover their True Self. The offerings to Gayatri and oblations to the dead would only take one to the land of the Dead. By meditating on the Lord's holy Name, one reached the Supreme Being directly. The Guru's disciples were not satisfied with the land of the Dead. As an example, the king of the whole world would not be satisfied to rule over one village but a poor man would only be too pleased to acquire one small village. Similarly, the people who deserve hell would only be too pleased to reach the land of the dead but a Guru's disciple does not even desire heaven. They would be satisfied only when they reached the Supreme Being.

Remember Death

6.29 *Bhai Goind, Gola and Mohan*

Bhai Goind, Gola and Mohan came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and requested for advice so that they would be liberated.

Guru ji advised them to recite Ram's Name and always remember death. When they remembered their own death, they would not commit any sin and recitation of Ram's Name would destroy the past sins. Thus, they would be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

How to Make the Mind One Pointed